

Mana

50 YEARS
OF COOK ISLANDS CREATIVE WRITING

In English and Cook Islands Māori



Mana

50 years of Cook Islands creative writing
in English and Cook Islands Māori.

An anthology selected by

Joan Gragg, Patricia Thompson,
Ngavaevae Papatua and Rod Dixon

With an introduction by
Emma Emily Ngakuravaru Powell

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Celebrating the Pacific, Shaping its Future

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Note on typesetting

The writing system for Cook Islands Māori uses the macron or te mākarōna (ˉ) to denote a long vowel and the hamza or 'amata (ʻ) to denote the glottal stop. The texts presented here cover a period of 50 years during which time there has been an ongoing and, as yet, unresolved debate about the standardisation of Cook Islands orthography. Rather than impose a still contested system onto the texts, we have chosen to present these texts in their original published form.



Dedication
Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe,
D.Litt. O.B.E.

Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe has been, in many influential ways, a pioneer of new Pacific literature. Her drive to see Pacific stories written, published and shared within the region and beyond has made a unique contribution to the development of an increasingly rich Pacific literary tradition. This anthology is dedicated to her life and work.

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Kia orana

A stylized illustration in a light blue color. It depicts a person from behind, carrying a basket on their head, walking along the crest of a low, rounded hill. To the right of the person are two palm trees of different heights. The entire illustration is positioned at the end of the 'Kia orana' text, which is written in a flowing, cursive script.

Journey through 50 years of our
literature with different generations
of Cook Islands storytellers.

Introduction

Emma Emily Ngakuraevanu Powell

Aka'papa'anga

The Pacific literary tradition – the corpus of writing from this region – is relatively recent compared to the traditions of Europe. This does not mean, however, that the region has been devoid of stories and dialogue. Quite the opposite. The title of this anthology acknowledges 50 years of writing in English and Cook Islands Māori, but, Pacific people have been writing for a long time. As a brief example, Marjorie and Ron Crocombe have done extensive work collecting and editing the writings of two early nineteenth century Rarotongan missionaries, Ta'unga and Maretu. From that work, we know that both men were writing extensively in the Rarotongan language after it was first given written form in the 1830s. Other Cook Islands writers of the 19th century include Luka Manuae (Aitutaki), Mamae/Sadaraka (Mangaia), Papehia (Rarotonga) and subsequently Te Ariki Tara'are and Tamuera Terei, the son of Ta'unga and “perhaps the most voluminous writer the Cook Islands has yet produced” (Crocombe and Crocombe, 1968;148). While this anthology collects writing from a far more recent period, it is important to acknowledge that Cook Islands literature did not begin with the advent of self-government and the opening of the regional university. Cook Islands people have been writing for a long time.

50 years of Cook Islands writing in English and Cook Islands Māori

The term ‘First Wave of Pacific Writing’ is used to describe the period during which indigenous writers and academics began writing in earnest response to colonisation. This coincided with the rise of political independence movements and newly self-governing nations across the Pacific region, of which the Cook Islands was one. The early sections of this anthology comprise Cook Islands writing produced at this time.

Most, if not all of these writings, were published by the South Pacific Creative Arts Society (SPACS) and the University of the South Pacific. Marjorie Crocombe was influential in the inception of both institutions and Subramani and Keown have highlighted the connection her advocacy had with her education at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) during the 1960s (Subramani, 1992: 17–18; Keown, 2007: 109). While at UPNG, Crocombe participated in a creative writing

course taught by Ulli and Georgina Beier. The Beier's involvement in the establishment of the Nigerian and Papua New Guinean literary tradition is noteworthy and both Albert Wendt (Ellis, 1997: 91) and Crocombe (1980: 140) have acknowledged the influence they, and the prominent writers from other African and Caribbean literatures, had on their writing and the growth of Pacific literature at the time.

Wendt's experience as a participant in the scholarship schemes of the 1960s was one shared by many of the literary institutional founders during the 1970s. These scholarships allowed students and scholars from across the region to learn and educate with a collective institutional strength and underpinned many new ideas of self-determination and decolonisation that were a central motivator of Pacific literary work. When the University of the South Pacific was created, the indigenous Pacific scholars who recognised the need for more literary support (Crocombe in particular) approached the then head of English to discuss ways of meeting this need. They were promptly told to go “form [by themselves] a writers club” (Va'ai, 1999; 26).

In retrospect, such a suggestion seems a product of its time. So closely following self-government and national independence, most central political institutions (institutions of learning included) were largely concerned with planning for the future economic and political stability and productivity of the new Pacific nations. This rendered creative writing of lesser priority. Crocombe and her contemporaries, however, held a rigid belief in an awakening literary movement and when they found little initial support through the University, they created two private institutions: The South Pacific Social Sciences Association (SPSSA), which focused on social, political and economic publications and, the most influential literary organisation in the Pacific, the South Pacific Creative Arts Society (SPCAS).

SPCAS was created in 1972. The organisation “dealt with poetry, short stories, drama and other kinds of creative writing as well as with music, painting, [and] dance” (Crocombe, 1980: 140). It was set up by members from a wide representation of Pacific nations placing SPCAS in a prime position to begin a communal regional effort to promote and support literary production. SPCAS became a hub of critical and creative literary exchange, a place where a strategic approach to building and reinforcing the field could take place.

Early on, Crocombe identified the need for “organisation, encouragement and outlets for writers to publish their work”. Publication was found first through a section named Mana in the journal Pacific Islands Monthly (PIM) and later, through the organisation’s independently published journal of the same name, Mana: a South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature. In an article reflecting on the development of SPCAS in 1980, Crocombe commented:

[Since] the publication of writings by Pacific Islanders through SPCAS, a great deal of interest has been focused on the development of writing in the South Pacific in overseas journals of literature. A large proportion of all creative writing in the Pacific in the 1970s was first published by SPCAS (Crocombe, 1980: 141).

SPCAS’ significance is measured by the breadth of publication it helped facilitate via its publishing arm – Mana Publications – and the number of noteworthy writers and scholars associated with it, many of whom went on to produce influential works of fiction, poetry and critical thought. Claims of such significance lead one to ask, if SPCAS had not been established, what would the Pacific literary field have become? Indeed, would it have begun at all? Un-anchoring so many influential Pacific writers from such an essential part of Pacific literary papa’anga seems impossible now when the genesis of Pacific literature is so deeply rooted in the reaction and response of the indigenous Pacific to the colonial narrative, and the support and community that was created to this end by SPCAS. To imagine self-determination, postcolonial and independence movements during this time without Pacific literature and SPCAS is absurd. And yet it also reveals the importance of SPCAS and the deep significance of Crocombe and her contemporaries in working tirelessly during this early stage.

Alongside Crocombe were Albert Wendt, Ken Arvidson, Satendra Nandan, Subramani and Cook Islanders, Makiuti Tongia and Kauraka Kauraka. As well as being accomplished writers, Crocombe, Tongia and Kauraka have been utilised for their skills as editors and their linguistic expertise. Tongia, who was another beneficiary of the post-independence scholarship schemes, lent his editing skills to the student magazine Unispac (Journal of the University of the South Pacific) and the MANA Journal while studying at the University in Fiji. He then went on to publish his first collection of poetry called Korero

in 1977. Pieces from this collection (reproduced below), have been proclaimed by Subramani, Keown and Wendt, as archetypal examples of early Pacific post-independence poetry and have been used in education textbooks (Crocombe, 1981: 12), quoted in discussions of regional postcolonial discourse (Hereniko, 1999: 146) and included in anthologies across the region (Wendt, 1980; 16–8: 1995: 57–59).

Kauraka Kauraka published his first poetry collection in 1985, entitled Return to Havaiki = Fokihanga Havaiki. It was followed by three other poetry collections Dreams of the rainbow = Moemoea a te anuanua (1987), Manakonako = Reflections (1992) and his posthumous Taku Akatauira: My Dawning Star in 1999. He also published a collection of legends, Legends from the Atolls (1984) and Tales from Manihiki (1982), mostly stories from his own island of Manihiki. Perhaps one of the most impressive qualities of Kauraka’s oeuvre is his provision of writing in his native Māori and the more widely read, English.

Mike Tavioni’s poetry collection Speak Your Truth (2002) included two versions of texts in English and Rarotongan Māori. Other Cook Islands poets have included varying amounts of Cook Islands Māori words and phrases throughout their work. This anthology includes new pieces by Mariana Powell, Jean Mason and Akekaru Kairae and Ina Papatua who write in Palmerston English, Maukean and Mangaian Māori respectively.

During the 1970s and 80s, a small number of graduates finished their tertiary education and returned to their home islands as a new class that scholars and commentators have retrospectively named “the educated elite.” Most had gained their qualifications and experience from the University of the South Pacific and the writers had, as members, writers and/or editors, been a part of SPCAS.

Crocombe’s article in Akono’anga (2003: 81–6) outlines a number of different Cook Islands arts organisations that appeared during this time, including, poet Michael Tavioni’s Akatikitiki Arts Inc.; Te Pua Neinei, created by author Lynnsay Rongokea; Tango Tupuna; and the Kau Ta’unga Society, which was set up by Kauraka Kauraka.

One of the organisations that seemed to have some endurance (though there were intermittent periods of inactivity) was the Ta’unga Creative Writers and Artists Association, which was set up by Vereara Maeva, Vaine Rasmussen and others. There has been little mention of other

Cook Islands literary organisations across the wider critical literature, however Ta'unga has been referred to numerous times. Finding any detailed historical account of the organisation in print has been difficult. Their comparative visibility may also be due to the collections published by the organisation and, the size and quality of publication penned by members of the organisation and published by other means. While numerous local organisations in the home islands had appeared for writers in the 1970s and 80s, few of them managed to publish regularly and endure.

There have, however, been a number of successful Cook Islands anthologies and collections with involvement from Ta'unga members. One of the first of its kind, *Purua*, was published in 1980 and edited by Tongia. The collection featured poetry in English and Māori and was published by Purua and the Cook Islands Teachers College and funded through the local USP Extension Centre. *Wendt's, Lali: A Pacific Anthology* (1980) also featured poetry by Tongia, two short stories by Marjorie Crocombe, and a poem by Cook Islands poet, Ta Makirere, in the same year.

In 1984, Ta'unga, as an organisation, published *Ta'unga '84* (Rasmussen, 1984), an anthology of poetry and short stories, in English and Cook Islands Māori. The serial was to be the association's annual publication, with work from its members and other pertinent news for the organisation. Unfortunately, it was short-lived. The Ta'unga '84 issue did, however, feature members Bobby Turua, Florence Syme-Buchanan, Kauraka Kauraka, Mona Matepi, and others. These four writers are mentioned for their appearance in other Cook Islands anthologies. In particular, the Tongia edited *Tipani: Poems of the Cook Islands* (1991), which was jointly published by Ta'unga, Akatikitiki, the Tauranga Vananga (Cook Islands Ministry of Cultural Development) and the Cook Islands USP Extension Centre. Such an associated effort to produce the collection in some ways reflects the community between Cook Islands institutions of learning and literature at that time. It also suggests key motivating figures at a certain period of time (1970s-80s), across certain networks that were able to make such a collective publication materialise. In his parting words on the final page of the collection, Tongia writes,

These poems give deeper insights into vital aspects of the dynamic search for a new identity and culture in the Cook Islands than volumes of scientific treatises. Anyone interested in understanding these islands today will want a copy (1991: 62).

His words seem appropriate at a time of considerable political and social change in the Cook Islands and the region. Following some of the broad sentiments expressed in poetry produced through SPCAS in Fiji (Subramani, 1992), pieces in the *Tipani* collection addressed the colonial/native binary, which had until this point lacked commentary from indigenous Cook Islanders through Anglophone poetry. Syme-Buchanan's opening line to her poem entitled *Forgotten Shelves* (reproduced below) – “Here we are, our mongrel selves” – in some ways sets the tone for the rest of the anthology, a collection of work addressing identity, the understanding of the pre-colonial past and a(n) (at the time), shifting postcolonial present.

Between the mid-1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Kauraka published his poetry collection *Dreams of the Rainbow* (1987) and his collection of legends in Māori, *E au tuatua ta'ito no Manihiki*. Alistair Te Ariki Campbell also began his trilogy of novels with *The Frigate Bird* in 1989 and the second book, *Sidewinder* in 1991. In the same year Rasmussen published her first poetry collection *Maiata* (1991), earning her status as the first Cook Islands woman writer to publish a collection of poetry. *Maiata* is a poignant collection of pieces that resonate with Pacific and Cook Islands imagery, symbolism and metaphor, from an “insider” perspective.

In 1992, Jon Jonassen published another collection of legends and ghost stories, *The Ghost at Tokoatarava* and other stories of the Cook Islands (1992). Though this anthology did not overtly focus on children's literature, some exemplary children's writers should be noted, among them: Johnny Frisbie, Mona Matepi and Tai'a Scheel, who published their stories through the Ministry of Education and its publishing arm, Learning Media (Matepi, 2000, 1999a, 1999b; Frisbie, 1991, 1994; Scheel, 1998). Tongia has been integral in encouraging teachers to write (Crocombe, 2003: 86) and Jonassen and Kauraka have been pivotal compilers of traditional myth and legend through collecting, editing, translating and re-telling during the 1980s.

Also compiled in 1992, as part of the Sixth Festival of Pacific Arts, held in Rarotonga that year, *Te Rau Maire* celebrated indigenous Pacific writing (Crocombe et al., 1992: iv) and featured the few prominent Cook Islands-based writers of the First Wave: Tongia, Kauraka, Jonassen, Rasmussen and to a lesser extent, Nanette Woonton and Takiora Ingram. Many had been included in *Purua* and *Tipani* and went on to be included in *Wendt's Nuanua* (1995).

A survey of Cook Islands writing from 2000 onwards shows a decline in the frequency of publication and a more pronounced presence of writing by those identifying as Cook Islands Māori within the New Zealand diaspora. In 2000, Jean Mason and Vaine Rasmussen edited the *Mana: Cook Islands Special* edition. This anthology featured writing in English and Māori by writers of Cook Islands background who were born in the home islands and in the diaspora, and those who were not of a Cook Islands background but had lived and experienced the home islands. A collection edited by Cook Islanders had not been seen since Crocombe et al. had published the pan-Pacific *Te Rau Maire* in 1992. This collection, published after an almost decade gap, departed somewhat from the postcolonial frustrations of the First Wave writers (Wilson, 2002: 511).

The criteria used for inclusion in *Mana: Cook Islands*, resulted in a far wider age range, a larger pool of contributors and an increasing prominence of diasporic pressures and experience within the texts themselves. Rasmussen and Mason wrote in their introduction that the edition hoped to:

...capture not just the lifestyle of Cook Islanders at present but over time. [It] also reflects the experience of Cook Islanders as an emigrant, as well as an indigenous people, and the experience of Cook Islanders who grew up in New Zealand visiting their home for the first time (2000; iv).

Their approach to the journal on the cusp of a new millennium reflected a shift in the diversity of Cook Islands identity and a renewed concern with how Cook Islands artists and writers were portraying this in their work. As in the Cook Islands work of *Te Rau Maire*, many of the pieces in *Mana: Cook Islands* reflected on God (Christian faith), appreciation of the environment and place in the home islands, family, nostalgia and wider, urgent political and economic issues pertaining to the Cook Islands. Rob Wilson, who reviewed the collection in *The Contemporary Pacific*, wrote that the publication:

...offer[ed] testimony to a mixed heritage of cultures, languages, and open directions. The dominant tone of this eclectic anthology is lyrical and humorous, more given to fusion and acceptance than to rage or exclusion, more tied to chant and song than to decolonizing critique or polemic (Wilson, 2002: 511).

Wilson's comments offer some insight into the difference between the material in this collection and in earlier Cook Islands anthologies. In terms of tone toward the prevalent treatment of the colonial project by Pacific writers during the 1970s and onward, the collection presented pieces that were, as Wilson puts it, "more given to fusion... than to rage" (ibid.).

After her editorial work on the *Mana* edition, Jean Mason published her first poetry collection *Tatau = Tattoo* (2001), becoming only the second Cook Islands woman poet to produce such a publication. Like Rasmussen's *Maiata* (1991), many of the pieces in Mason's collection were personal reflections on her experience of the home islands and meditations on shifting cultural identity and practices. Mason's emphasis on the island of Ma'uke, and her mixed British and Cook Islands Māori background, seem to be a significant part of her individual poetics.

In 2002, Audrey Brown published her solo collection *Threads of Tivaevae: Kaleidoscope of Kolours*, collaborating with Cook Islands visual artist Veronica Vaevae, who provided artwork throughout. Keown (2007: 201) has commented on the postmodern style of Brown's work, a characteristic that Wilson called, "textual experiment" (2002). Brown's work is demonstrably part of a contemporary generation of writers and writing still being added to. The postmodern poetics of her poetry clearly depart from some of the similarities and connections of early writers such as Tongia, Kauraka, Rasmussen and Mason. The present anthology includes Brown's "local tourist on a bus ride home".

Michael Tavioni, an accomplished artist, carver, tattooist and cultural commentator published his first poetry collection *Speak Your Truth* in 2002. His work focused on issues of cultural identity and diaspora and is represented in this anthology by *Bury Me in the Islands/Tanu iaku ki toku Ipukarea* and *The Investiture/ Akauruuru*. Tavioni is a compelling example of the multiple ways in which Cook Islands people express their cultural identity through various forms of artistic expression. Tavioni's well-known carvings are iconic to the Cook Islands tourism aesthetic and his poetry speaks frankly about the contemporary pressures on the Cook Islands identity. At the turn of the millennium, Tavioni penned a document – *Sink or Swim* (2003) – that was directed to Cook Islanders who were continuing to look to migration as a natural course for socio-economic stability. In 2011, working with

boys who had dropped out of the education system, Tavioni published an anthology of poetry, *Voices Along the Wayside*, in DVD format, featuring the boys reciting the poems from memory. The major pan-Pacific *Whetu Moana* (Wendt, Whaitiri and Sullivan, 2003) showcased the writing of Michael Greig. His biography gestures to his affiliations with the Northern Cook Islands group, though he has resided in Nelson, New Zealand for some time. Greig incorporates Manihiki Māori in his poetry. His focus on Maui as a legendary figure and also a central figure in his identity as a “Northern Cook Islander” echoes and reinforces Maui’s significant and recurring role in Kauraka’s poetics.

In 1993, Hereniko wrote in his article “Pacific Islands Literature” that:

[because] of the colonial experience, the writing in English, by many of the early Pacific writers was a weapon used against colonial oppression, injustices in social and political systems (local or imposed), corruption, social and cultural change threatening the quality of life in the islands, and personal and national attempts to attain self-determination...” (Hereniko, 1993: 48).

Many of the issues that Hereniko mentions are addressed by the writers in this anthology, whether writing in English or Cook Islands Māori. Their writing considers deeply the politics of nation and region; their environment and its sustainability, the deep spiritual and cultural meaning that environment has for their sense of self and culture, remembering, family, and the ways colonialism and globalization have impacted their lives and those of their loved ones. These texts are polemical, resigned and filled with anger. They are melancholic and, at times, nostalgic meditations on the past, present and possible futures of Cook Islands people and culture. But they are also filled with pride, with love and with celebration for Cook Islands genealogy and our nation made of land and sea.

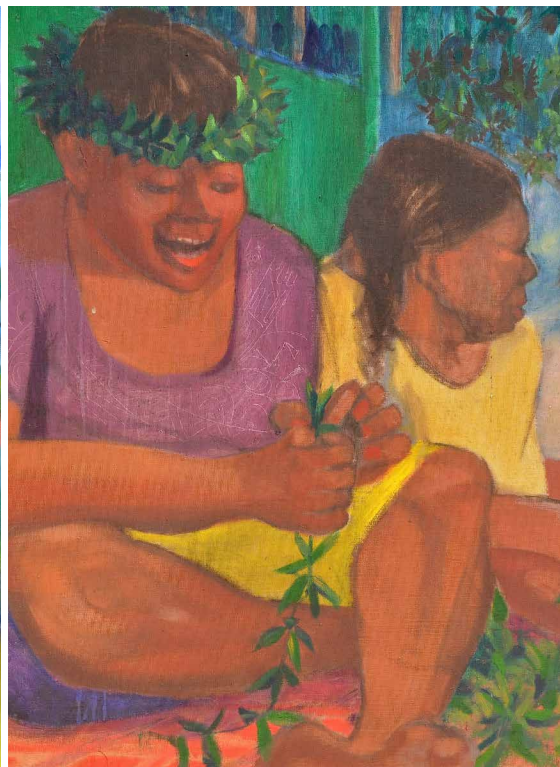
Past, present and future

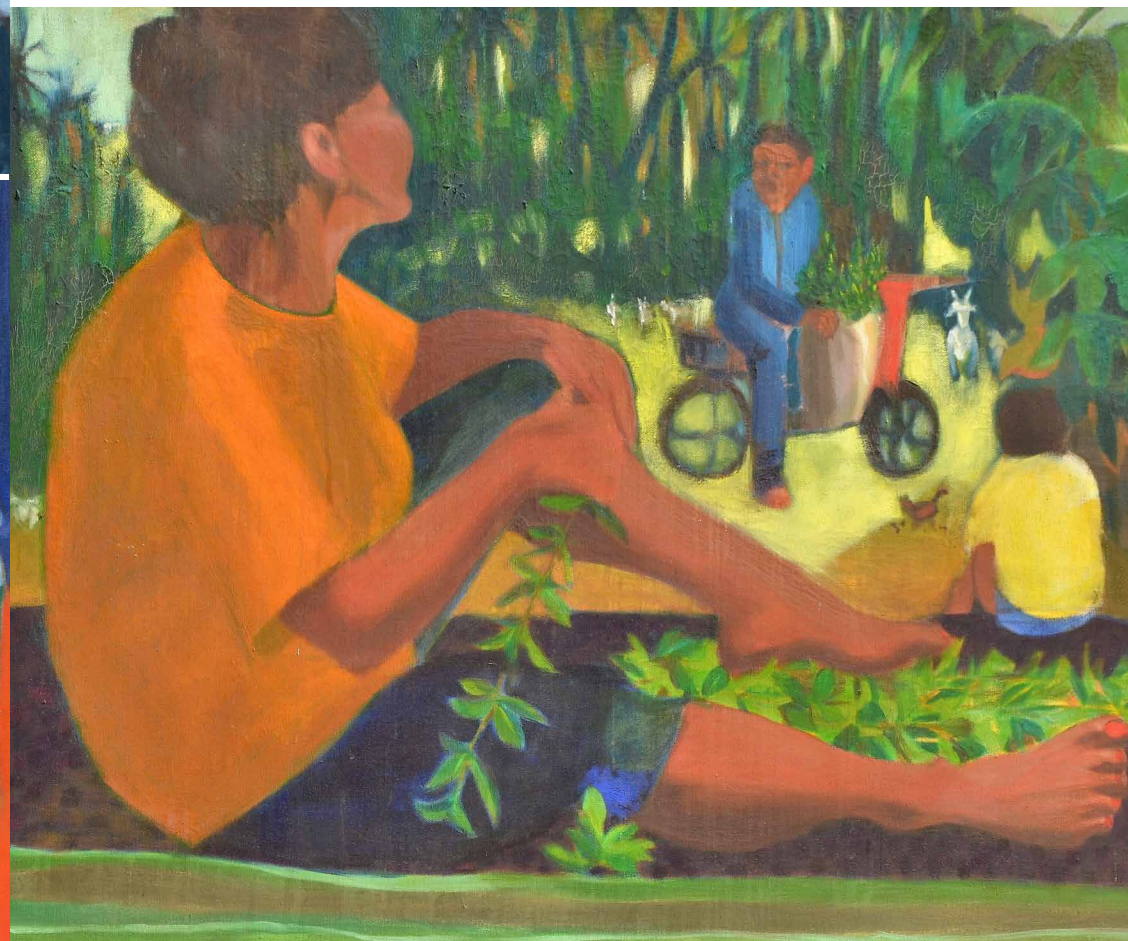
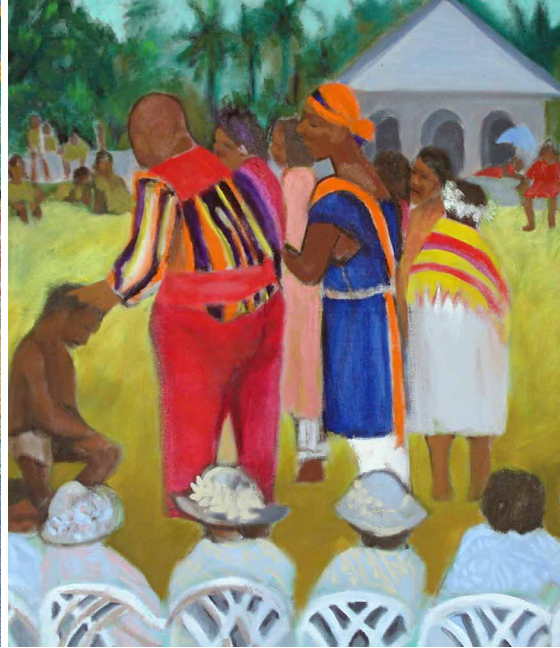
There are many Cook Islands writers who are not part of the survey above. They include Sir Tom Davis (Rarotonga); Mary Maringikura Campbell (Tongareva/Penrhyn); playwright and poet, Miria George (Atiu, Rarotonga); poet, Courteney Sina Meredith (Mangaia); and there are, no doubt, many others. But, as is the way with papa’anga, there are yet more layers and connections to be made.

In 2017, the University of the South Pacific introduced, for the first time, a diploma and degree programme in Cook Islands Māori. A specific focus of the programme is the study of existing Cook Islands literatures and the development of new writing in all of the Cook Islands vernaculars. The signs are fair, that when the University celebrates its centenary, a future anthology of Cook Islands writing will be greatly enriched by writing from all the islands of the Cook Islands in their own vernacular languages.

At this half way point, in celebration of 50 years of the University of the South Pacific and its support of Pacific and Cook Islands writing, it seems appropriate to invoke the old Pacific adage of ‘facing the future with our backs’. Accordingly, Part I of this anthology looks back to works published over the last 50 years; the majority by the University of the South Pacific. Part 2 offers new writing from Cook Islands writers who continue the papa’anga of Cook Islands writing in English and Māori.







Part one
1974 - 2010



*Tuanga
mua*

Bush Beer



A short story by
Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe, 1974

Tima drew a glass from his pocket. He passed it to Varu who dipped and swirled it a few times around the top of the tin, stopping now and again to skim off the froth, his hands deftly flicking out a bug here and a speck of fur there.

“Will poison us you think?”

“No, no poison, germs die already.”

“Where the others? You tell them the right place?”

“Don’t worry, they come. Saturday night, thirsty night. Plenty good time tonight. Er ... we drink?”

“No, we wait.”

The two men sat down, their feet touching the blackened kerosene tin which held “bush beer” concocted from the juice of raw, green oranges mixed with sugar and left to “work” a few days or so. It was illegal to make or drink bush beer and this very illegality, imposed by the law of the land, challenged the ingenuity of the village brewers to find secret places to make and hide their brew, far from the eyes and ears of the village policeman.

“Next week, your turn make beer. Remember, not water like last time, but real, good beer.”

“No worry Varu,” said Tima.

“This time plenty oranges.”

“Plenty oranges but you no got trees. Where from?”

“Ah, no worry Varu. I come work for my brother at seven o’clock every day. He pay me with cup of tea and bread, then I work – cut firewood, pull out taro for dinner, climb breadfruit tree for his wife, back down to earth, cut grass, feed the pigs, run up to pick oranges for papa’a visitors – and for eating at twelve o’clock, I get one plate breadfruit stew, just breadfruit. I look, I hunt for meat, oh brother, that wife of his is so mean. She buys bully beef. She always forget to put the meat in stew. But she find some Chinese water something – sour sauce something. Mean woman she is, brother. No worry brother, I make good, strong knock-you-out-with-one-glass-beer. My brother has plenty good oranges, just about ready.”

A low whistle signaled the arrival of six of their friends, still dressed in their footballs shorts and jerseys. One of the men carried a guitar.

They sat down, almost reverently, around the tin. Varu picked up the glass and once more swirled it around in the brew, slowly breathing in the heady fumes as he dipped further down in the tin, making sure not to disturb the paru, the heart of next week's brew.

Finally, Varu lifted the glass to eye-level and with an "ah-good" sigh, passed it to Potera, who drank with his eyes closed, while the others visibly told him, with their eyes, to hurry up.

"Aue – makes my inside warm," Potera confided, licking his lips as he passed the glass back to Varu.

"Time going fast," Pa said. "We miss Vere's belly dance. You know Vere, from Tahiti? No va'ine Rarotonga can beat her wiggle her arse."

"Ah, a friend of yours, Pa."

"No, but I seen her dance. Makes me a quiver to go – like this." He got up, swaying sideways, as he demonstrated how he was going to erode the concrete floor of the village hall with his gyrations.

"Bah. If you had jump-jumped like that this afternoon we would have won the rugby. Instead we carry home plurry big duck-egg," Metu called from his corner of the ring. He was getting tired of waiting for his turn with the glass.

"Each of you lost the game. All plurry frightened of Arorangi," said Varu. "Nearly wet myself looking at you from the sideline."

"Nah, Pa lost the game for us," Metu, continued, determined to press the point further. "Passed him the ball, he plurry dropped it. Passed him again he drop it. If not drop it he hug it like it's his woman. Fifteen in team, no, he play the game all by himself – greedy woman."

"He call me woman," Pa thought, tucking away that little insult in his mind, then wisely turned to Tama to beg a puff or two from his cigarette and to enable him to contain the rising anger in his belly.

Each had now drunk three glasses, thus loosening the reins of inhibition. Maki began to scrape a tune on his guitar, while Potera banged the rhythm on the side of the beer tin to accompany the beat.

"Ae, Maki," Metu began shouting above the rising crescendo of song.

"You listen to me. Your black horse ate my energy today."

"E-i. What this talk of tomatoes?"

"This is happy time, drink time, singing time. Talk about the girls instead."

"Plenty girls waiting at the dance ..." Maki answered. Bam! Metu's unexpected punch landed on Maki's nose causing his guitar to spin onto the ground.

"I talk about your horse, not girls," said Metu standing over his victim.

"Your horse ate my tomatoes see? Next time I kill you – your horse too," Metu threatened as his brother Varu dragged him away from Maki. "Shake hands you two. No shake hands, no drink," said Varu. Reluctantly, the two men shook hands and sat down again, with Metu mumbling about what he was going to do next time to Maki's horse. "I sorry now," he said, "but don't forget. Next time I really shoot that horse – you too. What you think," he said turning to Tama sitting next to him. "I been working many months get my tomatoes ready for New Zealand market in June and ..."

"Ae, Ae brother, you're right brother, you're right," commiserated Tama, flinging his arm around Metu. "No worry, I tell him again tomorrow. Not right. He should tie up his horse. Okay brother, I do that for you brother – tomorrow I tell 'im". And with apparent ease, Tama quickly switched away from tomatoes to the song the others were now singing, on the theme of so many songs – the constant fear of losing one's woman.

Aue taku vaine
 Auraka koe aere,
 Auraka koe akaruke mai
 laku e taku vaine
 Ka mate au i te aue ...

Only one man didn't sing. It was Pa, who had been brooding about the insult Metu had hurled at him earlier on. In his heart Pa knew he had played his best game that day and that it was just bad luck that their team had lost the cup. He wasn't a woman, that was that! Suddenly he stood up and spat on Metu's face. Metu punched back, missed and fell headlong to the ground just missing the tin of beer.

"Woman, woman," yelled Metu from where he sprawled. "Come here and fight like a man". He sprang up but was caught by Varu.

"Sit down you two heathens," he shouted, shoving Metu back to his place. "You are all the same, all you Tako family. Fight, fight all the plurry time. Party time, little beer in you, you want to fight. In rugby someone touch you, your fist answer. Your blood boils too quickly".

"Shut up Mai. Say nothing about our family," warned Pa and Metu,

opponents a second before but now allies joined together to handle a critic from outside their family. Varu judiciously said no more.

“All right,” said Varu, “Next Saturday you fight for the ball, win the rugby game. Tima make two tins beer tomorrow. You win, you drink all the beer you want. No win, well, my kumara garden will drink beer. Pass the glass Potera”. Potera was already snoring like a satiated sow on the grass, a banana leaf covering his face.

Peace was restored once more. There was much hand shaking and backslapping. “Let us pray,” Pa suggested. “We praise you Lord in the most high heaven for this good evening and good beer, good talk and fight and for making us brothers again. But Lord, we are afraid of our wives – those of us with wives – and we are afraid of our girlfriends – those of us with girlfriends. True Lord, they get angry and they say we drink too much orange beer and we smell like rotten sea slugs they keep in their leaf parcels.”

“‘We don’t want to dance with you tonight’, they will say. ‘We like sober young men who stand and dance on their own two feet’. Lord you understand them. Make them happy to see us. Make our friends and policemen look the other way tonight at the dance. Help Varu make another good beer next Saturday night, and Lord, he said if we win we drink his beer. If we lose, his kumara garden drink his beer. Help us win...”

“Ah, maniania – shut up Pa,” said Teina shoving him to the ground. “Okay – one more round, then we go dance.”

The last glass was passed around leaving an oozy sludge lying on the bottom of the tin. Varu and Pa lifted the tin and placed it in a hole under some bushes and covered it with a piece of roofing iron. Someone placed another banana leaf over the sleeping Potera and the seven men headed for the dance hall.

Broken

Makiuti Tongia from Korero, 1977

The forgotten are-karioi
is buried in weeds
The disfigured gods
are assembled for auction.
The chants of the priests
Hang on breadfruit trees,
Saluting the seasons
Of the missionary.
I bargain hard for my values
knowing the spine of Māori life
has been broken.

Beware Of Dog

Makiuti Tongia from Korero, 1977

As I walk this rich suburb
full of white and black chiefs
I hear the barking of a dog
I listen to its calls
knowing I am that dog
picking what it can
from the overflowing rubbish tins.

I say to you chiefs
bury the scraps you can't eat
So no hungry dog will come to eat
at your locked gate

Chiefs, beware of hungry dogs!

I'm Not Evil

Makiuti Tongia from Korero, 1977

Now that windows are opened
Into the rivers of myths
People tell of me
In the past before
my Christian banishment
I was their ally.
Today cobweb minds work late in the night
to instill fear into their children
The hills and valleys echo my presence
And young minds live the story
of me, a beast!
They travel in hushed groups
and I strive to tell them
"I'm here, it's alright
I'm not evil . . ."
But no one listens
Each one of them hurries
To the safety of their kainga.

Rangatira

Makiuti Tongia from Korero, 1977

First Voice:

I am the Rangatira
Yes!
Give me the chance, and
I'll give you the means
Together, we'll make the flour
Or your children's kai.
Together we'll seek the comfort
We want.
Then we'll sing in triumph of the
Fight we'll win
And flood our Marae
With what is ours.

Second Voice:

Nay, my people,
Do not be deceived.
Listen,
I am the Rangatira
Listen to me, hear me out.
I am the Rangatira, fully ordained,
Am I not the soul
That once healed the pains?
Am I not the call
You've been praying for?
So! Why be doubtful?
Why be sad?
At what has been?
Why cast that look
To make me small?
Give me the chance!
Am I not?

Third Voice:

Thanks to you
The fight is over.
The true Rangatira wins.
Where was he
When the harvest was bad?
What did he do?

Shooting rockets to the moon.
Working for Big Daddy,
Suit, necktie, and all!
His charms exposed, he
Retreats to us,
Seeks help and food.
Then!
Claims!
'I am the Rangatira!'
The harvest is bad,
My people is sad.
Ah!----a scapegoat!

The expatriates, the Demos---
Blame them!
They're leeches,
They're the bandits.
Rake them out.
Give them hell.
Come, my people!
Your Rangatira commands!
Seek and sack,
For they only pollute
Our stated salutes.

Love Burn

Jon M. Tikivanotau Jonassen from Mana, 1977

Inside a fire burns
Sad flames reflect the dark
lonely nights... again the old
pain and yearning mark
a tender but fierce love. Hold
one past precious moment apart
Strip tender warmth from tormenting cold
Exit all but those of the heart

Was it then our kiss?
Knowingly slowly touching searching
for new power and new hope in new promises
Endorsing with a seal the smiling successes each would bring
Was it mine or yours?
The smooth expression of charm hate fear and worry
that made feeble man's power alone in his jungles

Emerging between us was love
though fate life and existence
depend on something in nothing.
Love was above, begging no resistance;
reminding the seemingly sick story of love to sting

Bend that tall tamanu tree
and point it no more to its beloved sky
Love has found a new happiness amongst the silver
and the notes and the riches that lie
on the ground for the strong to fight. Spread here
dissolve and live to 'buy'

Cut that tree of tipani down
and lay foundations for full profitable
buildings up and up and up and down
happy flowers – stable
emotions hold no beauty of nature's gown
Buy them coconuts off the poor
and tips for the helpless and the kind

Backward past hallucinations died yesterday
at its ignorant door

I lament today wondering at traces
Alive with your kiss, a love burn
that finds no cure from newfound riches
Was it a fault in our kiss that beaconed us turn
and drift and leave behind tastes of nature's beauties
Was it a weakness for greed or fame that made return
a break in the barrier of our love
Is it in the changes that we learn
nothing or was it you or me burning inside a time cursing
moment that never mastered love



A short story by
Kauraka Kauraka

From Third Mana Annual of Creative Writing, 1977

The young men were standing in a group. Their eyes were carefully watching the ends of the short pieces of straw standing out of Toa's hand. The glare of the benzene lamp was so bright that all six pieces were clearly visible. The straws were arranged so that, although each was of a different length, their ends were perfectly level. But no one could tell which were the long or short straws. Their leader's hand concealed that fact.

The faces of the young fellows were serious as each of them in turn stepped forward to pluck a straw for himself. No one was talking, not even Metua, who was twelve and Teina, his brother, who had just turned eleven. They, too, were silent as they looked at the straws. Perhaps, somehow, they already knew that they were going to be the unlucky ones. They were right.

"Metua...and Teina," Toa announced quietly.

The rest of the group uttered sighs of relief. One or two of them danced a few steps of happiness. But the two boys remained silent and uncertain. Their feelings were mixed.

Teina was experiencing an odd feeling of joy. He and his brother might be going to have a lot of fun. Metua, however, was more serious and thoughtful. He was busily wondering whether they could finish the task, for which they had now been chosen, within the prescribed time. It wasn't going to be easy, not even for someone much older than the two boys. They had to catch a large shark to provide a new skin for the club's beloved drum.

"We'll have to do it," Metua murmured quietly. "But how I wish it hadn't been us!"

"Some people might say it served us right," replied Teina. "After all, it was you who broke the drum."

"If only you hadn't tickled me, everything would have been all right," Metua snapped back at him, with a sudden flash of temper. "I didn't mean to fall when I was carrying it."

Toa's dark eyes flickered in the directions of the two boys. He had caught a word or two from them and knew that a quarrel was shaping.

“Oti...kua oti ua!” he called. “Everyone in their places, please. We’ll start with the action song. Then Tapaeru will perform her solo.”

The group broke up. The members had done well when they elected Toa as their Chairman. He could handle their quick tempers and sometimes difficult moods far better than anyone else.

As the sound of Toa’s guitar began to murmur in the warm night air, the young girls swayed into their dance. Their slender bodies, arms and hands were telling a love story as they danced. Singing filled the air, each voice adding colour to the sound. The combined, tuneful volume of sound came from everyone’s lips.

Metua and Teina liked watching items, especially when Tapaeru was dancing. Tapaeru, their fifteen year old sister, was one of the youngest girls in the group.

Tapaeru’s hands and arms moved gracefully through the air. Her hips swayed sinuously as she moved alone, over the grass in the middle of the half circle formed by the other girls. Tapaeru was doing her solo dance to the tune of “E tai Purotu.” Her fingers fluttered and undulated like tears falling. The story of the song was being expressed through her body’s movements and was now about to end. The guitar fell silent. The singing died suddenly.

“Your turn, boys!” Toa shouted.

Metua sounded the large drum a few seconds late. Teina joined in with his small drum a little late too. They had been too busy watching Tapaeru dancing. Toa looked at them furiously.

“Start again! That was terrible!” he called out.

The boys chuckled. Perhaps Metua could not hit the small drum as well as he could the shark-skin drum. But anyhow, he couldn’t play it that evening because of the big hole in it. No one could get a satisfactory sound out of it, however hard they tried. Metua had really looked forward to playing the drum that evening, since it was his turn that week and not Teina’s, but now he couldn’t.

The boys tried again. This time Metua hit the drum too fast.

“Come on! Do it properly...I’ve got my stick here! See?” cried their uncle impatiently.

“Aue!..” Teina muttered. They did it again and their uncle Toa was happier. The boys tried to do their best, but their hands would not move as steadily as usual. They seemed stiff and nervous, they were thinking already about how they could catch that shark.

After about an hour, Toa called the item practice to stop. Either he was too tired or the boys’ drumming had put him off. The others didn’t seem to be worried. Perhaps they understood how the boys felt that evening after being given the job they would soon have to do.

The young men and women took their dancing costumes off in the corner of Toa’s thatched house.

“Metua, could you get the benzene lamp?” asked Toa, pointing towards the branch of the au tree a few yards away from the house. Teina saw him hesitate. “E...kua matakū,” Teina called. “I’ll get it, uncle.”

“Maniania koe,” Metua replied.

Metua was scared. His uncle once told them about a ghost who liked sitting behind the au tree to listen to the music while they practiced their items. If he didn’t like the music, he could be heard muttering to himself in a low, throaty voice.

But the ghost would only be there on special nights of the year. Some believed that the night before a full moon was one; that was usually the night when ghosts came out from their graves and enjoyed doing the things they used to do when they were alive.

Tonight happened to be one of those special nights and Metua knew it. He continued to take things into the house while Teina walked towards the au branch where the benzene lamp hung.

Teina heard a grunting sound like the noise made by a hungry pig. He shouted and the noise stopped.

“What was that all about?” called Toa.

"I thought it sounded like a pig digging. When I shoed it away, the noise suddenly stopped," replied Teina.

"Probably was a pig. They often come around to eat food scraps on the heap over there," said Toa, who feared that perhaps he knew the story about the noise.

The night was getting cooler and the grass damp. A swift breath of wind passed by. They entered their uncle Toa's house and said good-night.

"Thanks, boys...and good luck with your shark fishing," Toa said as they were leaving.

"Ae, we need lots of luck. This will be the first and, I hope, the last time that we go shark fishing alone," Teina answered.

On their way home, the boys talked to each other about how they could get a skin for the drum. They had to get one as soon as possible.

Metua was still a little afraid as they walked through the dark bush, towards their home, not too far away. He had to try very hard to listen to Teina's long string of ideas.

At last their plan was ready.

The following morning the boys were sent by their father Tane to feed the family's pigs. Metua carefully hid the steel hook and sennit fishing line, which he had "borrowed" from his father, in a paper bag and dropped it into the pig's scrap tin. Teina placed some coconuts over the bag.

The pigs were kept in a stone corral far away from home, but the boys got there quickly. They began their task straight away.

Metua sliced the bush-knife through a few coconuts and then threw the opened halves to the pigs. They got busy munching right away, sniffing the clean, white flesh with their filthy noses before sinking their teeth into it.

"Will that one do?" asked Teina, as they stood among the pigs and piglets.

"Ae," Metua replied.

They began to move towards their victim. The piglet seemed to guess their intention and backed itself against the stone wall. Teina's hands dived for its legs but slipped. The piglet ran past Metua too. They tried to block the little animal, then, in a corner. It ran desperately between Metua and the wall. He grabbed the animal around its hind legs. It fell over on its side, screaming. Teina rushed over, placing his hands over the piglet's mouth, trying to keep its jaws closed.

Then he sniffed the air. There seemed to be a very unpleasant smell coming from Metua's left hand. Teina looked and saw that his brother's hand had been smudged with freshly released pig shit. He burst out laughing, but Metua didn't care. He had caught the pig.

They carried the animal over the wall to a certain spot. Metua held the newly-sharpened knife in his right hand. He knelt over the piglet's back, his left hand clamping its mouth and pushed the long, cold knife into its throat. Blood gushed out over Metua's hands, which kept moving. The pig's body shook but Metua had caged it. Its wind-pipe had been cut, so that more blood was blown out over Metua's face.

Metua held on. After a few moments, he felt the animal's body begin to relax. Suddenly, the little animal stopped breathing and lay, lifeless, on the ground. The same hand moved into the dead body, searching for the heart. When the heart had been found, it could only be removed after much tugging. The boys of course, believed that the heart of a young, healthy pig was the best shark bait of all. "We'd better bury the body now," Metua said a few minutes later.

"What? You mean you're going to waste it? Why don't we cook it?" Teina asked.

"No. We don't have enough time," Metua replied.

After burying the body with the blood-stained leaves, the boys moved quickly through the bush to the beach. They chose a spot where they thought no one would interfere with their fishing. It was still early morning, but the sun was climbing well above the horizon. The air was warm and the wind blew gently across the calm sea, through the toa tree leaves and over the boys' relaxed faces.

"I could sit here all day," said Teina.

“Me too, but...” Metua replied.

“...we don’t have enough time,” Teina finished for him.

“Right. You said it. Let’s get moving,” Metua answered instantly.

Metua slipped the pig’s heart onto the hook and dropped the fishing line over the reef into the deep blue water.

Metua stood nearest the reef with Teina behind him, holding loosely onto the line. They waited patiently, hoping for a bite and a tug.

Suddenly Teina found himself gasping for air. He had fallen face first into the water. Both his hands were tight around the line. He sprang up to help Metua. His elder brother was struggling to hold the line, which had suddenly snapped taut.

“Hurry!” Metua exclaimed. They pulled with every ounce of strength they had. The harder they pulled, the more active the line became. The line, made from coconut fibres, took the strain well.

The boys, however, could not hold themselves in the same place. The fish was overcoming their united strength. The tight line was fairly hissing as it cut through the water.

The boys struggled, panting and spitting as they fell into the water and dragged themselves up again. Their eyes were closed and their teeth clenched. Metua kept calling to Teina to pull harder.

Their feet dug deep into the sand but they were gradually being dragged closer and closer to the reef. The rocks felt sharp and hard as they pushed against them with their feet. Even the line felt hot as they held on, muscles aching, sweat upon their faces.

“Are you sure it’s a shark?” Teina shouted through clenched teeth.

“Must be,” gasped Metua. “No other fish...could...pull like...this.”

Metua fell and nearly hit his head on a rock. A sharp splinter of shell made a cut on his ankle. The fish had pulled them almost to the reef. This was dangerous. Soon they might be forced to let go or be dragged into the deeper water where waves were breaking.

“Shall...we call...for help...” Teina panted.

“No!” snapped Metua.

“Don’t be stupid! We’ll get pulled in.”

“Shall we let go then?” Teina was becoming scared. The deep water was very close now.

“No,” repeated Metua. “Let’s keep trying.”

They went on fighting, but inch by inch they were losing the battle. They were now standing on the outer slope of the reef. The line was cutting their hands as they tried to hold it. Their feet kept slipping outwards on the wet brown seaweed.

“I’ll call!” burst out Teina. His voice was really frightened now. “I won’t. You can. You’re younger than I am,” Metua snapped back. Then he fell into the small waves crashing against the reef. Teina’s voice rose in a breathless scream. He looked at his brother trying to stay above the water, and then glanced towards the shore. Again he called for help; then again and again. His shouting became breathless. Tears streamed down his cheeks as he strained at the line, his feet slipping outwards to the waves all the time. It was hopeless; no one would ever hear.

Suddenly the line seemed to stop moving. Teina glanced behind him swiftly. He saw a man at the very end of the fishing line. A tail shot up into the air, threshing above the surface. Then a black fin cut above the sea and vanished immediately.

“A shark all right!” Teina shouted.

“Yes, a big one,” Metua replied, his breath short and gasping.

After a long, strenuous tug-of-war they landed the brute. The man gave the shark a few mighty blows on its head with a wooden club.

Teina was already busy inspecting the shark, turning it over to study its sex and cautiously feeling its dark brown grey coarse skin. Metua was more interested in the man.

He looked very old, but he had given them tremendous help in beaching the shark. Metua didn't believe that any elderly man could be so strong.

The shark was the biggest they had ever seen. It was about seven feet long and in fine condition. The old man opened the shark's mouth and took out the pig's heart. It had been chewed, but was still in one piece. He twisted the steel hook, tearing it out of the shark's jaw. Then he gave it to Metua, who quickly and carefully wrapped the heart in some leaves.

Metua was trying to look at the man and hoping to identify him, but the old fellow kept his head bowed and, while he worked, kept his back to the boys.

Metua wanted to ask him who he was, but something was keeping him from doing so. He gave up, moved a few yards away and rolled the fishing line into a neat coil. Then he dipped the line several times to wash away any sand or dirt.

When he turned around again he saw that the old man was wading back across the shallow lagoon towards the beach. The boys called their thanks to him, but the stranger didn't look back. Silently, Metua and Teina watched him plod away along the beach and turn inland.

"A strange fellow," Teina said.

"Tika rai," Metua agreed, still gazing after the vanishing figure. "I wonder who he is?" He paused before adding: "I've got a feeling I've seen him before."

"I've heard stories about some man who lives alone around here. He looks old but he's very strong..." Teina explained. He stopped abruptly and shrugged his shoulders. "Who did you say he was?"

"I don't really know," said Metua. "Let's skin the shark!"

Within a few hours, they finished skinning the shark. They worked carefully, trying not to cut the skin in the wrong place. The skin was then cleaned and pegged out to dry in the sun. The carcass was rolled back into the sea. It would make a good meal for hungry eels.

That evening Metua secretly returned the steel hook and the sennit line to his father's fishing box. After tea, they asked to be excused for item practice. They got the still damp skin and showed it to their uncle Toa. He was thrilled to see the skin and helped to rub salt onto it to help the curing. It was such a big skin that it seemed impossible that two youngsters had caught the shark.

The news quickly spread through Takitumu village. Metua and Teina's father had heard it too. He was proud of his sons but highly annoyed when they confessed how they had "borrowed" his line and hook.

Two evenings later, their father decided to hear the story again from the boys. He was deeply interested in the part about the old man. Like his sons, he wanted to find out the man's identity, for without the man's help, others would not have admired his sons for such an interesting adventure.

This time, it was Metua's turn to talk. His father sat opposite him, his face attentive in the dim glow of the kerosene lamp.

Grandmother walked in when the tale was nearly told. She began changing the nono leaves that she had put on Metua's cut leg. She listened silently to the rest of Metua's story.

"Did you happen to see the man's face?" the old lady asked.

"Yes, but not very well... He had a small scar on his left cheek," said Metua, "and I think he was a little lame in one leg."

"Was the scar curved like a half-moon," Grandma inquired, "and was he lame in his right leg?"

"Yes, I think so. How did you know?" asked Metua with a surprised look.

"Who is he, Grandma?"

"A great old shark fisherman in his day," replied Grandma, busy with the nono leaves. "He was Karoi, my grandfather. Let me see... Yes, he must have been dead now for the past 60 years."

Matapo o te Ngakau

Tere Tarapu from Purua, 1977

E kavenga riri au no te aroa kore
E vairanga tuatua kino no te tangi kore
E puaka taku kai putuputu i te au ra.
E tanapapeti te kinaki i taku puaka
E vai mata te omaki i taku kai
E karo taku kapu ti i te popongi
E one enua te ariki i taku kai
E 'ou te vai pāi i toku kopapa
E roa anga po te akaoti i taku angaanga
E moa te akava i toku akangaroia
E puku rima te peni i toku mata
E potonga rakau te tamuramura i taku ngutu
E paraku tita te peru i toku rouru
E purumu kikau te tatatau i taku kiri
E animara te akapumaana i toku taitaia.
E tumu nu te uunaanga i toku aue.
Te mamae nei au
E mamae ngakau tikai
Te roiroi nei au
Te akakoromaki nei ra au
Ko toku tu e tupu nei
E mea kitea kore ia
E tei matapo te ngakau

Trade winds

Alistair Te Ariki Campbell
from *The Dark Lord of Savaiki*, in *Mana*, 1980

You were just a girl,
 one of two wild sisters,
 when he came to Tongareva,
 a gloomy trader,
 his soul eaten away
 by five years
 in the trenches.
 You followed him
 from island to island,
 bore his children
 only to see your dreams
 break up
 on the hidden reef
 of Savaiki.
 Mother,
 your footsteps falter
 outside my window,
 where you have waited
 fifty years
 for your children
 to return

The moon comes out,
 lovely
 as a mother's face
 over a sleeping child.
 The trade winds
 are your fingers
 on my eyelids.

Mihi ia Tongareva Letter from Rarotonga Hospital

Alistair Te Ariki Campbell
from *Collected Poems*, 2016

Hedges of hibiscus
roofs of flamboyante
high above the roadways,
stained with bright blood,
cannot contain
my longing for Tongareva.
Thick as stars
are the blossoms
under the tipani tree –
useless to sweep them away
when they keep falling
fast as my tears.

My husband,
when we were first married
you were like the mango tree,
surpassing other men
as this tree
surpasses other trees
in strength and beauty.
I was like the maire,
growing unnoticed
until you noticed me.

How the young girls envied me
when I carried off the prize
for the best hula dancer
in Avarua!
You were the prize I won –
I danced for you.
Old man,
these heavy hips
could swing as teasingly,
pound as fiercely as any
that have stunned the loungers
in the Banana Court.

The tipani
though old and gnarled,
still aches with blossoms –
though fewer than they were –
that suffocate the night
with sweetness.
The mangoes ripen and fall,
tearing the silence,
as my heart is torn
by thoughts of Tongareva.

Fear rises in me,
naked and sheer
as Maungatea Bluff,
that I will die here
in Takuvaine,
unattended by my ancestors,
and never more lay eyes
on sacred Nahe or Paniko,
swirling with seabirds,
the black terns
and the white –
never to see again
the young boys laugh and shout
as they dive among the sharks
at Omoka,
near my grandfather's tomb
where our children lie.



A short story by
Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe

From *Lali: a Pacific Anthology*, 1980

Mata was a witch. At least that was how Europeans translated our word 'ta'unga', which really means 'a specialist in the art of the supernatural'.

She lived by a small stream that L-shaped its way along. Her tiny house nestled under some coconut trees, and beside her cook-house there were the usual mango trees, a clump of sugar cane, and a lemon tree. The creek was a useful one, for Mata's family fished there for prawns and eels. They also drank the water and bathed in it. We lived next door and we used to swim in a deep water-hole higher up the creek. Further up again, there lived another family who made similar use of the creek, but they also tethered their pigs by it.

Mata's family could not afford to install a tap. We felt superior because we had one, but now I come to think of it we were little better off with our upright tap outside our kitchen than Mata was with her creek water. The tap water originated in the same mountains as the creek, and in the rainy season both became the same undrinkable chocolate brown.

"What do you expect?" Nero would say when we got periodic attacks of stomach trouble. "We drink gallons of mud from the open intake and not to forget the shit of dear old Boss's cattle that roam around there. Maki was telling me the other day that they found some cattle bones in the water intake up there." Then he'd amble off to write another letter of complaint to the Administration. It achieved nothing.

Mata's husband was Piri, a returned soldier with the distinction of actually having seen Egypt and the Red Sea during the First World War, when he had volunteered for service with the New Zealand forces, like many other islanders. Now he could look forward every year to a free trip to town to take part in the Anzac Day parade. Piri would dress up in his long white trousers, white shirt, coat and tie, and he would pin on a couple of war medals. Then he would send his daughter to watch out for the truck.

"Papa," she shouted as the truck veered round the corner half a mile away. "Papa, hurry. It's coming - now it's passing Brown's place - whew it's going fast." The driver stopped the truck with a screech of brakes and the horn beeping loudly. But there was no need for Piri to rush: he knew that the kavamani had sent the truck to get him and it would not leave without him, no matter how impatient the driver was.

There were many of his fellow ex-servicemen on the truck. Some of them old, toothless, grey-haired men. Piri immediately noticed that one or two were not on board this time.

“Where’s Tua?” he shouted as the driver revved up the engine. “In hospital,” he was told. “Been there for six weeks now.” Piri also learned that Mani was dead, and that someone else was too old to march any more. “But you look young, anyway,” said Tei. “Must be the good bush beer that you have around this part of the island.” Piri didn’t answer. He knew they were referring to his son, a notorious brewer whose name regularly appeared on the list of court convictions.

The parade was a short, sterile affair, but it could not stifle the feeling of oneness among the soldiers. The group was small and one would rub shoulders with prestigious men, both Māori and European. It rekindled in Piri an ember of glory that would help him through his other three hundred and sixty-four days of insignificance.

After a rather bedraggled march to the soldiers’ memorial, several prayers, a Biblical text, and a hymn, a bugler who was long out of practice sounded a tinny Last Post. The men were dismissed. Then they went and drank cups of sweet tea and ate dry sandwiches. Soon it was all over for the Māori veterans. The truck took them home again to obscurity until the next Anzac Day service – if they lived that long. The European ex-servicemen would retire to one of their friend’s homes and drink beer. It was against the law for Māoris to drink and it was on occasions like this that laws like that really hurt. Some Europeans took particular Māoris home to drink, but that only made it worse for the uninvited like Piri.

Piri shook every hand warmly as he left the truck to walk home. “Not many old people left,” he would tell Mata later, as he struggled out of his restricting clothes. He sighed with grateful relief as he flung them on the mat and wrapped a length of pareu, a gaily coloured sarong-like material, round his waist. Then he sat down cross-legged and rolled a cigarette.

“After the service,” he said to Mata, “we had pieces of bread with tiny bits of meat in them. Not enough to feed a hen! Got anything to eat?”

“Only this,” Mata replied, pushing a banana leaf parcel towards him. Piri’s hunger vanished rapidly as he was confronted with a blob of

dried-up, rubber-like octopus tentacles that had been baked in an earth oven the day before. He pulled out the smallest piece, dribbled some coconut sauce into his tin plate and dipped the meat into it. Then he swirled the octopus tentacle round, as though hoping to soften it. But it remained as hard as it had ever been and his worn-down molars refused to cope with it. Finally, in disgust, Piri threw the chewed remains of the octopus meat into the open fire and noisily drank the sauce from his plate. His wife just sat and watched.

Piri was a little sorry for Mata. He had had a very interesting day, yet his wife had never been up to the village since they had been married. She lived a very withdrawn life.

Mata was known as the ‘ghost maker’, for she had power to call on her own special spirit ‘Ka’u Mango’, or ‘Ka’u the Shark’. Because of this she was both feared and respected, particularly by children.

Mata, it seemed, knew everything that went on in the spirit world, but of course she kept up to date on what went on in the real world too. Keeping abreast of gossip and scandal was part of her stock in trade, and the spiritual answers usually reflected the material realities.

The screeching of wagon wheels on the sandy road and the whoa-ing of the driver soon brought Piri back to the present. “That coming here?” Mata asked. “Oi-Oi!” she was answered from outside, as if the visitors had heard her question. “Oi-Papa Piri e! E Mama e!”

“Oi-come!” Piri answered as he stepped out from the cook house. Then he stuck his head back inside to tell Mata who the visitors were. “To see you, I think,” he added. A young boy was lying on a pillow in the wagon.

“Take them into the other house,” Mata called to Piri. “I’ll come in after.” Mata picked up the knife and finished prising the chestnuts out of their shells, carefully placing them on a tin plate.

Inside the separate sleeping house the leader of the party was telling Piri why they had come. She brought out a packet of tobacco from her basket and passed it to Piri. What a luxury it was for Piri to roll a cigarette with real cigarette paper. Normally he used nothing but dried banana leaves, which smelled just like those women smell who burn the rubbish by the road. Piri rolled one for Mata too, who was coming in now.

“Ae - we’ve come today because it is a holiday. We were hoping there wouldn’t be many people here.” After a puff or two on her cigarette, she continued, “My grandson here, we took him to hospital. The doctor, a European, he tap him here; he tap him there; he listen to his chest and took a picture – aue – where was it, Mere?” She turned to her daughter trying to pick up the thread. “Ae – ae- a picture of the chest, but he find nothing. They give us big bottle of white medicine, but he drink it all up quick – nothing happen to him. Still the boy is not well. The Māori doctor friend he say – Ae, try our own medicine at the ta’unga. Maybe she can fix him.”

Mata said nothing for a while. Nor did she examine the patient. She seemed to withdraw into herself and her eyes became glazed. Her body trembled and her mouth twitched as she fell into a trance. At last she asked Mere: “Where is the boy’s father?”

“Dead.”

“Where?”

“Makatea Island, digging phosphate.”

“He write to you? He send you things?”

“Yes, every ship from there bring something.”

“You write back?”

There was silence. The mother wept, blowing her nose. Mata said no more. The spluttering of the candlenut lamp cast eerie shadows in the house and the smell of the nut was very strong. The sick boy wanted so much to cough, but he was too scared to break the silence. Mata stared towards the entrance of the house as if she was willing something to enter. Piri, the two women, and the sick boy looked towards the door, wondering. It was getting late now. Then the silence was suddenly broken by a distant voice that immediately stopped the boy’s weeping. The voice came from the direction of Mata.

“E Mere e! Can you hear? You know who it is – don’t you? Listen carefully to me. Don’t waste time weeping. My sweat – I wasted it in the mines working – to earn money for the European house you wanted. I sent the money – the plates – the glasses – the linen – and – and perfume – yet you lie to me – I didn’t know you lie so much. My friend had a letter – from his wife. She say who you live with – that news made me angry. My gang was working that night – I fell from the top – top of the cliff. And I want – want my son – to – aaaah!”

“Aue, aue,” wept the mother of the sick child. “It’s true, it’s true what you say.”

Mata did not move any more. She sat as if in a deep sleep. Then her eyes twitched and slowly opened. Still, no one spoke. When she was fully awake she said: “I make some medicine for him to drink.” Piri got up and went outside to gather the stalk of the red sugar cane, a few leaves of a plant that grew by the creek, and some green guava leaves. Then Mata said: “I think your son has cried for his father – he wants to die like his father. He doesn’t like his new father. Ask him at home if that is true. You and he can help each other sort out what to do,” advised Mata. “Then come again next week.”

On the way home, the young boy, Tei, thought about Mata’s words. Indeed he had cried for his father to come and take him away. For he hated to see the new man around the place who would not even help his mother in the tomato plot, who wouldn’t even cut the grass around the place. All he seemed to do was get drunk on the weekends and sleep off the effects of his three-day bout for the rest of the week. Once he had thrashed Tei for answering back, and that day Tei had decided to die like his father. It had been his secret until that day but, as Mata knew, it was a common ‘way out’ among her people.

“Mama,” he whispered to his mother after everyone had gone to bed. “I did call Papa to come and get me. I wanted to die very much.”

“Why?”

Tei told his mother the secret. As his mother led him in the dark, Tei felt for the first time that maybe he did not want to die after all. And Mere made up her mind to send away Epi, her lover. When she told him to leave the house there was a tremendous row, which attracted the attention of the neighbours.

“It’s taken a long time,” one said. “Why she kept such a good-for-nothing for so long I don’t know. And now all of a sudden she gets rid of him.” “It’s because they went to see the ta’unga.” “Is that so?” “Oh, you and your tupapaku story. That’s all you women think of.” “What do you know about such things anyway? You who were born yesterday.”

When Mere returned to the ta'unga the following week, Mere's husband spoke to her once more through the medium of Mata, but this time he was pleased. "Meitaki," he said, "Tei should stay with you." And Mata added, "Carry on taking the medicine I made for him, but no need to come back and see me."

Mata's reputation as a healer was confirmed again, and she had a long line of visitors in the afternoons. She did not exploit her clients. Some brought her gifts of food, tobacco, and occasionally money. The police ignored her activities. The Māori policemen probably secretly believed in her powers. Even the church ignored her. Many churchmen brought their patients there as a last resort. After many futile visits to the hospital, they came to try Mata's kind of healing.

One night my sister fell off her bicycle after she had been packing oranges for the monthly ship that called at the island.

"Get the benzene lamp," ordered my mother. No other lamp would do, for the brighter the light, the less likely we were to run into a ghost on our way to Mata's home.

Mata did not need to go into a trance for such a simple diagnosis. "It's the arapo," she told us without hesitation. "Look at the moon, it waxes full, and on such a night the chief Tepera walks. He comes down along the boundary of Brown's property and the Seventh Day Adventist compound. That's the way he always goes. Tonight he was chasing a slave who escaped out to the sea. He never catches him though, so he is awakened to repeat the performance every night like this for ever." "Why did Alice get hurt?"

"He doesn't mean to hurt anyone, but your daughter happened to come along when the chief was passing. She brushed against him, that's all. Lucky though she didn't run head-on into him or we would have had bad news for you tonight."

Mata's clients continued to come and go. We knew most of the visitors there, because our mother was very friendly with Mata and she got the more personal details from her. Throughout the years Mata's reputation grew and she attracted many clients. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, came her tragic downfall.

There was a visitor from the outer islands staying with Mata and Piri. One day, he went fishing in the lagoon. He did not return. The news spread through the village and the men went out to search for him up and down the lagoon. But they could not find him. Mata sought him by spiritual means without success. On the third day, Piri found Kati's body wedged in a rock in the harbour. Piri and his son wrapped the body up in a mat and they floated it home along the edge of the lagoon. Somehow it was a familiar sight – for Piri was always dragging something home: a piece of log he found on the beach, a dry coconut leaf for his fire, or a bundle of octopus on a rusty wire with its tentacles streaming behind. Now he returned with Kati, the epileptic, who had gone out fishing three days before on an equally beautiful morning.

"What's happened to Mata?" someone asked, as a group of curious helpers followed the bundle to Piri's home. "Why she not tell Piri where to find Kati three days ago?"

"E'aa – what did you say?"

"You know, Ka'u the Shark. He knows everything." Soon they reached Piri's place. He untied the rope from the mat and threw it into the canoe that had been drawn up on the beach. Silently the men stepped into the water and took each corner of the mat bundle. They heaved it up and walked up the beach to where some other men had already dug a grave.

"Didn't you send for the pastor?" asked Timi.

"He's inside with Mata."

"I'll get him now," said Piri, grateful for a chance to get away for a moment.

Soon the pastor came out, followed by Mata and Piri. Mata's hair was disheveled, her eyes were tired. For the last three evenings she had tried to call upon Ka'u the Shark to let her know where Kati's body was. But Piri had found him merely by accident, maybe helped by his knowledge of the currents in the lagoon and harbour. Kati's death was a defeat for Mata and everyone knew it.

The pastor conducted a short ceremony. There was no wailing. No pigs were killed. Nobody bothered to perform more than the bare necessities for the underprivileged stranger.

From then on fewer wagons drew up outside Piri's house. Even we children heard the news that Mata had lost her power. We were now a little less afraid to pass her house at night.

Mata died alone one day, when Piri was out fishing in the lagoon. Ka'u, their son, who had been named after Ka'u the Shark, migrated to New Zealand to seek a new life. Piri was now too old to attend the Anzac Day parade. His daughter got married and moved to another village. Then some distant relation took pity on Piri and invited him to come and live in another village.

At long last the owner of the land on which Piri had been living was able to take it back with an easy conscience. Often he had been tempted to kick Piri and Mata off, for they never supplied their share of food gifts, even when requested, but he always feared Mata's supernatural retaliation. Now she was no more.

Piri's former home was burned to the ground and the site was ploughed up and planted with sweet potatoes. Only Kati's grave reminded us of the spot where the village healer had lived and plied her trade.

Looking Back



A short story by
Vereara Maeva

From Mana, 1980

When I was young my world revolved around my grandparents who looked after me and an aunty, whom I believed was my real mother.

I grew up to love only them. Being the first-born child in a family of seven and the first grandchild in the clan, they spoiled me. I did not do the things most other children had to do. I didn't have to make my bed, pick up rubbish or wash my clothes. I could go swimming whenever I liked or play marbles. I wore a new dress on almost every special day because my Grandma and aunty were both tailors. This freedom made me almost useless. When I started school I was taught to become independent. I had to learn to pick up rubbish, sweep the floor and wash my clothes. I began helping Grandma, and doing things without being asked, much to the surprise of my family. However I still had the freedom to go off and do things my own way, when I felt like it.

I did not know who my real parents were until I was eleven years old. My grandparents regularly received money order telegrams. One day one of these telegrams arrived.

"What's the telegram about Grandpa? Who is it from?" I asked. Grandpa stared at me blankly then handed me the telegram to read. It was a money order for twenty pounds, with the following message, which I still remember:

ALL WE LOVE TO OUR DAUGHTER VALERIE LOVE KURA.

Valerie was the name given to me by Mrs Hickling, wife of the Resident Agent of Aitutaki. My aunty worked for them. They found it hard to say my name Vereara so they renamed me Valerie.

"Who's Kura, Grandpa, and what is the money for?" I asked. Grandpa was almost in tears. He called Grandma and they both tried to tell me something that they had kept from me for so long. "Kura is your real mother," said Grandma. "The money is from your parents. They live in Pukupuka – or maybe Samoa." Grandma was crying. "So I have real parents somewhere?" I said.

In 1953 a big change came into my life. I was chosen to attend Tereora College in Rarotonga.

After all the freedom I'd enjoyed back home, it was difficult to adapt to my new way of life in Rarotonga. I was quite small and found it difficult to do some of the things a young girl was expected to do like making high double beds every morning, washing bed sheets and clothes practically every day, cooking pancakes, ironing embroidered cushion and pillow covers and table cloths. My guardians took it for granted that because Grandma was good at these things, I should be too.

Many times I came back home from school looking forward to a decent meal, just like I was used to back at home. I had to do some jobs first. That kept me busy until very late in the evening and often, by then, I was too tired to eat. Sometimes, when it was not too dark, or when I couldn't stand the hunger pains, I would sneak down to the shop to buy bread and ice cream that I ate secretly. Luckily I always had money from my grandparents to buy things.

When I was sent to feed the pigs I often cried. Sometimes I just threw the scraps at them. I couldn't go any closer because I've always been scared of pigs and of the dogs barking. If there were not enough food scraps, I had to go up into the mountains to cut water grass for the pigs and collect firewood for cooking. I was always scared of the bush and the dogs that insisted on coming with me.

I was very unhappy and lonely and used to cry secretly for the love and comfort of my grandparents and our little home in Aitutaki. The freedom I had enjoyed seemed to have withered away like fallen leaves. However, I made up my mind to stay on and continue my education and accept life as it was. In spite of the hardships and loneliness, I found some peace and happiness amongst friends, some of whom were like real sisters and brothers. Even the teachers were very kind and helpful. But I did have problems with school because of my home situation. I couldn't always finish my homework, even during interval. Often my teachers were angry with me for failing to complete homework. I couldn't bring myself to tell them that I had lots of odd jobs at home that took me till late at night to finish. I was often too tired to study. And I was not allowed to keep the light on at home after 10 o'clock because of the power bill. When I bought a table lantern to use for study, I was told that smoke from the lantern would blacken the ceiling. Sometimes I would go to the kitchen, separate from the main living quarters. It was very uncomfortable there because the doors and windows in the kitchen were open, and the wind blew out the light. Besides, like most Cook Islands children, I was always scared of the dark and ghosts.

When I couldn't manage any longer, I told my teacher what was happening. He was very sympathetic, and he let me use our classroom after school to do my homework. He was quite happy to allow me to use the classroom, but was concerned that I should eat properly. I had money to buy food on my way to school in the morning. That's what I had been doing most of the time I was at Tereora. Some of the outer islands students who had similar problems boarding with relatives joined me in the afternoon to do our homework in class. When I had sorted out my homework problems with my teacher I didn't care anymore whether I ate at home or not. I could manage on my own although I knew my guardians wouldn't like my changed style of living. I still had a guilty conscience and felt I should go back home and do some work around the place. When I was free, I would rush straight home to do housework to make up for the days I had missed.

Many times when I went home late I wasn't invited to eat. That didn't worry me as long as I had somewhere to live and was able to get my work done. Also I knew that my grandfather sent my guardians money to help support me. Neither my guardians nor my Grandpa told me about this, but I knew it because I saw the money order telegrams quite often. Though my guardians often did not talk to me or feed me, I never told my grandparents about it. It would have hurt them to know what was happening. Some of my friends invited me to stay with them but I refused to move out. My guardians couldn't tell me to get out because they often stayed with my grandparents when they went to Aitutaki.

It was around this time that I found out who my real parents were. I had passed the scholarship examination. There were medical examinations and X-Rays to be done and various forms to be filled out by my guardians and me. When I was given my birth certificate, I found out the names of my real parents. I couldn't believe what I saw. I remembered the name Tekura, very vaguely. I was told she was my real mother but my father's name also looked strange. I had never heard of it before. When I was told later that my father was half-German I didn't believe it. Germans did not exist in my world! Surely I wondered, I couldn't belong to these strangers. Later I was told that they had visited me in Aitutaki when I was small, but I couldn't remember anything about them.

The week before I was due to leave for New Zealand, I was notified by the principal of the college that I wasn't going. He said there was something wrong with my X-Ray. I knew this couldn't be true. I was very healthy and, some weeks later, the doctor who did my X-Rays expressed his surprise at seeing me still in Rarotonga. I told him everything that had happened. He assured me that there was nothing wrong with my health. It was sheer favouritism. The girl who was my substitute never beat me in many things in school.

During my second year in Tereora, the same thing happened. I sat the scholarship exam and again I was told I had passed. Again I filled in all the forms only to be told again that I couldn't go because there were four eligible girls and only two boys. Once of the girls had to stay back to enable another boy to go. The boy was from Rarotonga. "Why am I treated like this? Is it because I'm not a Rarotongan?" I asked myself many times.

"What's the point of winning a scholarship only to be let down again?" Even my guardians were concerned. "This is not fair", they said. "They've let you down again, for the second time." I'll go and see the Director of Education about these dirty tricks," said one guardian. I thought better of it and tried to talk my guardian out of it. "What's the use?" I thought. "Maybe I am not good enough to go to a New Zealand school."

I wrote to Grandpa and told him I was giving up school and coming back home. Three days later he flew from Aitutaki on the N.A.C plane. He was very disappointed, but asked me to be patient and have another go. After some counseling from my guardians and Grandpa, I agreed to have another go, but I wasn't going to sit any more exams. I couldn't have a third try anyway because I was, by then, too old for a scholarship. That was my last year at Tereora College. I put myself deep into my study and worked really hard to pass my final exams.

I wanted to be a nurse. There were three of us who wanted to become nurses but there were only two vacancies. We were given a test and two of us got through. Now I thought, luck has finally turned my way. I imagined myself in a smart uniform and stiff cap. Then two days before I started my new job in the hospital, my Grandpa heard about it and objected to my becoming a nurse. "Too dirty a job", he said.

"I want you to be a teacher." How could he know what job would suit me best? How could I be a teacher when I wasn't even good enough for a scholarship? I had always believed that teachers must be very bright people. I didn't have confidence in myself as a teacher. Worse still, I was too small to be a teacher. Teachers have to be bigger than the children they teach, I thought. What happened to the freedom to choose that I used to have? Why couldn't I still decide things for myself? Why is Grandpa deciding it for me now, yet he never used to do that in the past? I became really hurt and annoyed with Grandpa, but my conscience told me that Grandpa still had a strong hold on me. Perhaps he was only doing what he thought was good for me. I had no choice but to do what he said. Suddenly I realised that this was the first time that I had allowed Grandpa to decide anything for me. I became very guilty of the fact that I was so ungrateful and disrespectful of his concern for my well-being.

Reluctantly, I applied to go to the Teachers' College and started training as a teacher in 1956. At first my heart was not in the work; I still wanted to be a nurse. I didn't take much interest in what was going on and when at last the first exam came, for the first time in my life I failed to pass. I felt my world had come to an end. The realisation that I couldn't always pass exams, that I might fail sometimes, really opened my eyes.

The principal told me he could not understand my report from Tereora. It did not agree with my present performance. He said that perhaps my teachers in Tereora had favoured me or they just wanted to get rid of me. This really hurt me because I knew it wasn't true, and I told him so. I just didn't work hard enough because I wasn't interested in teaching. He must have realised how I felt, as he told me, either I start getting interested in the job or he would send me out of the college. I didn't like what he said and I thought to myself. "I'm going to show this smart principal that he has the wrong impression about me." Then I thought of my grandparents and all what they'd done for me. I mustn't let them down. They would not live forever to support me. The best thing I could do was to grant them their wish and become a teacher. I loved them very much. I cried. I then promised the principal that I would do my best if he gave me another chance. He was very pleased and encouraged me to push myself and really get stuck into my studies. Almost every day I prayed and asked God to help me, to teach me to know what is right and to give me knowledge and understanding. My prayers must have been heard and God took pity on me. Everything

went well and I successfully completed my first year's training. I was satisfied and happy, and so was the principal. He said he couldn't believe I was the same person he'd known eight months earlier.

During my second year, before I was posted to Avarua School to do my practical teaching, I had a Form I (Grade 7) class all to myself. For the first time I felt the burden of work preparation, of controlling and disciplining the children, marking their work, and learning and practising the skills of teaching. I always looked forward to the visits of our lecturers from the Teachers' College, to inspect me teaching and to analyse and help me overcome my weaknesses.

Again I felt the urge to further my education, so I enrolled with twenty others in the New Zealand School Certificate. We studied at night. It was very hard work, but good fun. There were different people tutoring different subjects but they were not teachers. They knew the subject, but could not really teach in the way a trained teacher does. They tried their best but they were not much help. I worked on my own most of the time and almost gave up on a number of occasions.

As time went by, I heard more and more about my brothers and sisters, but had still not met them, except for one sister who was brought into our family just before I left Aitutaki to come to Rarotonga.

About mid-August 1957, I received a letter from a brother in Pukapuka asking me to visit. That was when I met my real mother and my other sister and four brothers, for the first time. I cannot describe my joy, knowing I had another family. It was a time for tears, tears of happiness knowing that we were back together, tears of sadness because my father was dead and I had never met him. But in spite of all the excitement, deep in my heart, my first and greatest love was still for my dearest grandparents. I treasure their memory wherever I go.

A Book and a Pen

Vaine Rasmussen
from Mana, 1980

When I was young
They gave me a book and a pen,
A set-rule and a calculator to play with,
Test-tubes and Bunsen burners
To experiment with,
And then a piece of paper
That said
'Academically qualified to matriculate at any University'.

When I was at University
They gave me another book and pen,
Marx's theories and Solzhenitsyn's literature
To debate, discuss and agree over,
Political thought and administrative procedures
To digest
Then another piece of paper
Called a BA.

When I came back
They gave me a job.
I used books and pens,
Letterheads and folders
To fill up with trash.
A paypacket to cash
At Tamure or Tumunu.

When I grew old
They gave me a pe'e
A legend, a song
And a language to master.
A dying culture I had lost
In my search.
And I grew up at last
Realising I had missed a lot.

Parataito

Tere Tarapu
from Mana, 1980

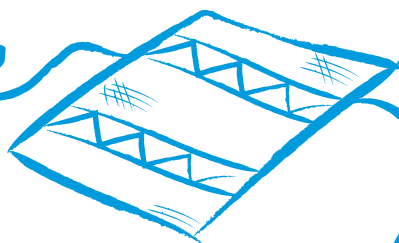
E manu au ka rere
E tuitarere,
E tarevaka
E metua kore i te enua o etai ke
E torea turituri no vaivai ake
E akaaraara i te moe a to Lefaga

Noku te reva
Noou te taua
Kua akaei koe iaku ki te ei o te aroa
Tei riro ei itiki ia taua
Kua ainu koe iaku ki te tuatua mou
E kua merengo toku vaerua
Kua oora koe i o korero ki aku
E akairo no to taua pirianga muna.

Kua rongo to te rangi i toku reo kapiki
Kua keukeu te enua i te tuatua a toku vaerua
Maine Telesia, e mou
Mama Tafagamanu tapu
Ko te rito ia i a taua korero
E puera mataoi taku ka apai
Ei akakite ki te ao i toou kakara
Ka taea nga pore e a

E ra kua parepare
O taua ata kua roroa
Ka rere te manu ki tona tauranga
Ka noo te toke ki tona nooranga
Tei taku ngakau te oonu o te tuatua
E pure i to taua pirianga
Kia kore e motu

Grandmother and the mat



A short story by
Mona Matepi Webb

From Ta'unga, 1984

She sat cross-legged on the bare concrete floor, her slight frame bent over the pandanus mat she had been weaving for the past hour. Her aged fingers moved with practised ease along the fresh row of criss-crossing pandanus strips, the right thumb pressing the pandanus down as the index finger of the left hand swept up a handful of pandanus strips with lightning speed.

The room was sparsely furnished: a little table stood in one corner. On top of it was a well-worn Bible. The binding had come off at one stage; it was now held in place with row upon row of sellotape. Beside the table was a single bed. The kapok mattress that had once been on it was now replaced by a new spring mattress. A mat similar to the one the old woman was making covered the floor on that side of the room.

In the still of the afternoon, only the rhythmic clip-clipping of the pandanus strips could be heard in the old house. While her fingers weaved intricate designs on the border of the mat, the woman's mind wandered as she reminisced of her youth gone past.

The only daughter of a family of six, she was the favourite of both parents. She was also the envy of the girls in the tapere for she never had to tramp inland to weed the taro patches. Not once did she have to wade knee-deep in mud to get mamio for the family meal. She was one of the lucky ones. The loving yet strict upbringing by her parents prevented her from partaking in the village gatherings of the mapu. Her beauty attracted many suitors, but all were to no avail. Only the best would be considered for the hand of Tetonga's daughter in marriage.

Pre-marriage courting was frowned upon in those days. If a man desired a woman, it was the correct procedure to approach the parents concerned for permission to marry. The old woman smiled whimsically, as she recalled the first day her late husband had approached her parents' house. He brought with him an a'ai, which, he explained to her parents, was a gift for their daughter, Makitae.

During the days that followed, he paid regular visits to her parents' house always with some kind of offering in the form of food such as pork or chicken cooked and still hot from the umu, a kit of mamio and an a'ai, for he was a reputed fisherman. The old woman shifted slightly to ease the cramp in her legs. She sighed and muttered, "Yes, he was a great fisherman," and, with that, her thoughts lapsed again into the past.

It was about a month after he had first brought the fish for her that her mother had allowed her to speak with her benefactor. But only for a short while. Out of all the mapu in the village, he was the only one that had awakened her interest, and the following day her mother told her of the forthcoming marriage to him. There would be a lot of work involved and much feasting. She remembered her mother's words before the wedding.

"E ine, we have watched over and protected you for twenty-five years. You have been a good daughter, but now it is time for you to leave us. Tomorrow you will have a new parent. He is a good man, he is strong, and he is clever. A lot of the village girls would give their right hand to be in your position, for you are a lucky girl. You must not disgrace us, you must be a good wife for him: cook his meals and keep him clean, for that is the duty of the wife."

Then the obedient answer – "Ae, e Ma."

She remembered being carried on the pa'ata from the church to her new home, her husband's home. A fleeting smile stole across her lips as she recalled the speech her father gave at the wedding feast that followed. He had addressed her husband – "E unounga, akonoia tau tamaine, are e topa purumu!" The old woman chuckled at the memory. Her wizened eyes cast a saddened look around the room. Within these walls were imprisoned the memories of her youth and a happy marriage.

"Now I am on my own, Nga is gone." She did not realise that she had spoken out loud.

"E Ma! E Ma!" The voice of her youngest grandchild floated into the room. He was calling to her from outside. The old woman chuckled again.

"Tera tamaiti, e Pa, do you remember our son at that age? Aue, teia mai!" The grandson toddler leapt into her arms, tangling himself in the strips of pandanus on the unfinished mat.

"Why do you sit in here making those stupid mats, Grandmother?" he demanded in his childish voice. "My mummy bought a new mat today, it's made of plastic and it's easy to clean! Come and see it, Grandma!" He tugged at the old woman's arm. But she shook her grey head at him, smiling in her gentle way.

"No, my child, I have seen the new plastic mat; but this," she held up a roll of the dried and flattened pandanus leaves, "toou arikiriki teia, the pandanus is your mat, the plastic one is imported. Now, you look at this mat," she patted the one she'd just been weaving. "Your grandfather was born on a mat like this one, and his father before him. Even your father was born on a mat like this. It is one thing you can hold and say it is truly yours. But the plastic? No, that is the papa'a mat. Not yours, not the Māoris'." She fingered the stripped pandanus leaves lovingly. "This has been here since the beginning of time and here it will remain and be known." Then she looked into the puzzled eyes of her mokopuna and dropped a light kiss on his forehead. "Run outside and play, child. Someday I will tell you the meaning of the mat."

As the grandson ran off, the woman returned to her reminiscing, her old gnarled fingers once again busy, weaving.



A short story by
Florence Syme-Buchanan

From Ta'unga, 1984

She looks forward impatiently to the monthly visits by the regular ship. She will walk down to the wharf and watch men and machines busily strain underneath the Pacific sun unloading goodies for her island.

But the watching is not for long, she has a different purpose. The sailors, bored with weeks of oceans, gaze at her with unveiled interest from the decks of their ship and blatantly express their desire. They are not gentlemen, but hard men deprived of female companionship for too long. This does not worry her, for she has no pretensions at being anything other than a boat girl who is there to sate the sailors with longed-for sex. Boats mean business for this island girl and her clientele's harsh crudeness is accepted without complaint.

In her gay floral dress she will sneak past bored Port Authorities in their dry-cleaned uniforms and try to beat her girlfriends on board.

A few moments on board are spent choosing a customer (or vice versa) and settling the cost of pleasuring him. She will be lucky if her client can offer a drink. One drink can lead to many and a drunken sailor is easier to manipulate, or cheat.

Rima turned seventeen on board a ship last week. She cannot remember whether it was the Fetu Moana or the Tiare Moana, only that two days were spent in drinking and sweaty sex in the mephitic atmosphere of the cramped cabins. Everybody had wanted a try of the birthday girl, who eventually stumbled off the vessel two hundred and fifty dollars richer.

On this particular morning Rima opened her sleepy eyes and recognised the familiar surroundings of her shabby room. There is no ship in today.

Tired eyes focus on the digital watch strapped to her thin wrist. The watch, a present from a now obscure lover and an object of envy amongst the other girls, told her it was 2.47 p.m.

She tried to recall the previous night's events before kicking off a thigh her partner had carelessly flung over her after a night of heated sex. She rolled off the lumpy, sweat-dampened mattress and wrapped a faded pareu around herself.

Not bothering to glance at sleeping Ioane, Rima crept out of the old house and ran to the rickety shower-house made of corrugated iron. Her mother, Vera, had attempted to conceal the rusted roofing by planting kopi around the outside. Despite Rima's hangover she noticed the kopi flowers smelt particularly lovely this morning.

The cold shower washed away her hangover, fatigue and traces of the night's primitive crudities. Rima reminded herself to buy another bottle of shampoo on Monday and for the time being resorted to using Lux instead.

Gathering her pareu around her lean wet body, she remembered her nosy neighbours and dashed into her clothes-strewn bedroom.

She flicked her wet hair over Ioane's sleep-creased face.

"Oi, get up!"

The sleeping figure mumbled an unintelligible oath and came to life. "You'd better get up and put your clothes on – and you might as well go home."

Rima made it sound more a command than advice.

Ioane reluctantly raised himself, unable to conceal the typical morning self-consciousness at his naked body.

After the youth left, Rima tidied the room, which she usually shared with two younger sisters, and counted her last boat takings after folding away the last of her clothes. A hundred and ninety-five dollars left; the Banana Court had been the recipient of sixty-five dollars last night and God knows who else she had bought drinks for apart from Ioane and herself. And Vera would be asking for money to buy food for the family, and her sisters needed new uniforms. She'd be lucky if thirty dollars would be left over after her family had their handouts.

Lighting her first cigarette of the day, Rima quietly comforts herself that another boat is arriving tomorrow.

It is during the few solitary moment like this, Rima often wonders about love and remembers how she became a boat girl.

Her first visit to one of the ships was to accompany a friend, a hardened, older boat girl, to meet a prospective customer. The boat seemed enormous and exciting, and fascinated the naïve fifteen-year old virgin. Rima did not know exactly what prostitution was, or what the word meant. She only had a vague idea why her friend Tutai was on board the ship. Tutai introduced her to some sailors who welcomed the young girl so profusely she found it overwhelming. Nobody had ever made her feel so wanted.

In the stale, stuffy cabin, Tutai explained to the younger girl about being a boat girl.

"Plenty money," Tutai told her confidently. "You can make over a hundred dollars in one night and all you have to do is open sesame." To Rima this sounded simple enough. The money temptation was hard for the young girl to resist, and her family's poverty was quite well known in Tupapa.

Anyway, her virginity would be lost sooner or later, and in the process of losing her virginity she might as well earn some money, Tutai reasoned.

Rima's first customer was one of the officers whose seniority gave him privileges that were not confined by ship rules. He was a big, hairy, rough man who crushed the young girl to the narrow bunk, making it difficult for her to breathe, and when she was able to gasp for air, it sickened her stomach to inhale the papa's stale breath.

Three hours later, Rima left the ship, no longer a virgin, a hundred dollars clutched in a nervous small hand and unsteady on her feet after her first taste of rum and coke.

From that day ships became a means of quick finance and an easy exit from the boredom of school. Her parents eventually gave up trying to stop Rima, and only acknowledged her presence when money was needed in the family or chores had to be done when her sisters were not home. Rima didn't mind, it left her bereft of parental nagging and she could do what she pleased.

Except fall in love and be loved.

It would be nice to fall in love, whatever love may be, Rima constantly assured herself. Often the young girl would ask herself whether love was the safety of marriage and children or the seemingly never-ending nights of fulfilling desire ... merely as a vessel accommodating sailors with sex. Rima yearned to exchange the short soulless business ventures for permanent love. But the money she earned from 'business' she could not afford to sacrifice.

But local men don't fall in love with boat girls, she sadly reminded herself. Her occupation was common knowledge, and marked her like an ugly tattoo as far as local males were concerned. She provided for only the few who were hard-up for loose sex, and then there were never any dates or rendezvous afterwards.

Rima always assured herself that one of these days a handsome local fellow (preferably one who had come back from New Zealand) would fall in love with her (or her love-making) and marry her. She would be such a good wife.

But the other boat girls, especially the older lot, laughed at Rima's thoughts. "No guy will want to marry you, you're just a taramaea," they would say. Rima gave up sharing this dream with her friends, but kept on hoping.

Epilogue

It is six years later and Rima is twenty-three; most people think she is older; the haggardness of her face tells of struggle, disappointment and approaching alcoholism. The constant bouts of VD have also left their wrinkles on the once smooth, attractive face. Her figure is still slim, but her belly protrudes even though Rima is not pregnant. She doesn't make as much money from the boats; the regular sailors are tired of her and seek the younger girls.

You will see Rima at the Banana Court hanging onto a post because she can't stand upright. As usual she has had too much to drink after spending her last boat takings.

A good boat night means thirty dollars these days, all of which is spent on drink, and Rima still prefers rum and coke.

Most of the BC males know Rima by sight and try to avoid her. Unwary tourists, passing her by, will be shoved an empty glass with the plea that it be refilled, and if they stay long enough, will hear Rima speak with sadness in her large unfocusing eyes about her one hope, to fall in love with the right man.

"I'll make such a good wife," she'll tell them.

I Will Return

Kauraka Kauraka
from Fokihanga ki Havaiki, 1985

I will return to Manuhiki
place of my origin
and my ancestors
I must sail the double canoe
across the Pacific ocean
to my homeland.
I am just a house-keeper for worms of the land
I am a floating coconut husk in this land.
When I arrive at the passage of Ava-nui
I'm sure to smell sweet fragrance of the hinano
I will return to Manuhiki
the perfect resting place of my soul.

Darkness within the Light

Kauraka Kauraka
from Fokihanga Ki Havaiki, 1985

Show off with your New Zealand degree
Think you're smart?
Let's compete climbing for coconuts!
Can you husk my number of nuts?
Can you dive and fill the sack with pearl-shells?
Think you're smart?
Count, see who's got the most?
You really think I'm dumb?
You're not aware of the darkness within your light.

How I pity you!
Foreign knowledge has blinded your heart.
When I welcomed you with a greeting kiss
You offered your cheek to someone else.
When I slapped your thigh to say Hello
You thought I was seducing you.
I spoke to you in Māori but you replied in English.
You wouldn't lend a hand unless I paid cash
I despair, my friend, you leave me desolate!

Ko Onu E Akari

Kauraka Kauraka
from Dreams of a Rainbow, Mana, 1987

I tetai po matangi kua torotoro atu
tetai mama onu ki uta no te anau
i tana au ua ki raro i tetai tumu nu
I te arapakianga atu te putangiu
o te onu ki runga i te aka o te nu
kua tuatua mai te nu, "Ae, akamotu: E maineine.
Te timata nei au i te moe."
"Aue, akakoromaki mai ana e Akari;
Me ka tika ia koe kia anau ana au
i taku ua ki konei? Kare e meitaki
ki te atea i runga i te one."
Kua kite a Akari
e ka motu tetai pae i tona au aka
me kerii te vaarua no te au ua.
"E Onu, e keri i te vaarua
inara e taputo'u mai koe e ko au anake
te ka rauka i te kai i te anga
o taau au punupunua.
Ine?"
"Ae."
Kua anau te onu e a tauatini ua ki roto i te va
o te au aka nu e kua akono tikai a Akari
i te reira mei te mea rai e nana tikai.

Turtle and Coconut

English translation of 'Ko Onu E Akari'
Kauraka Kauraka

One stormy night a pregnant turtle
Crawled ashore to lay her eggs
Under a coconut tree
As the turtle's nose
Touched the coconut roots
The tree said, "Stop your tickling.
I'm trying to sleep!"
"Forgive me Coconut: can I lay my eggs
among your roots? It's no longer safe
out in the open sand."
Coconut knew
some of his roots would be severed
to make a hole for the eggs.
"You can dig your hole Turtle,
but promise me that only I
can eat the egg-shells of your young.
Agreed?"
"Agreed."
Four thousand eggs were laid between the roots
And the coconut tree cared for them
As if they were his own.

Te puera tiare Maori

Kauraka Kauraka
from *Dreams of a Rainbow*, 1987

E matangi angiangi reka e te kakara
kua pu'ipu'i ua kare e akamutu
kua riro ei akaroa i o matou pukera
taku puera tiare Maori i runga i te rara
o te tumu tiare openga i teia nei ao
Toou teatea vanira kaka
mei te aiti kirimi maru vene e te oraora
kare rava e ta'e i roto i te vera o te ra
na toou ngakau ma koe i paruru
mei te aua'i poitini a te tangata nei
kua timata o ratou rima vi'ivi'i
i te a'ae i toou rau purotu e te matutu
inara kare to muatangaana i akaruke ia koe
To ratou rima noinoi kare e rauka
i te opu i toou kopapa karape
to ratou putangiu piripiri kare i akaongi
i toou aunga reka
no ta ratou takingakino i te tutungi
i toou tumu rakau kopu tangata
kua ngaro ia ratou te tu o te akaongi i te inangaro
Taku puera tiare Maori i runga i te rara
o te tumu tiare openga i teia nei ao
toou tu tiratiratu mei te au kara o te anuanua
kare roa e tienianga i to ratou nga'i
E kite pakari toou mei te pueo kare e inangaro i te tuatua
kua akaipo koe i te rango meri o te mareva ora.

To Koringo

Vaine Rasmussen
from *Maiata*, 1991

A fragrance of frangipani
Tickles the sweet face of fate
That destines each one
To glory or pain,
An everlasting dwelling
That cannot be changed.

A rose blooms
Amidst the cracks and jars of life
And deadens the purpose of the scene,
To excel its power in full sight
A mere decorating thing.

Forgotten Shelves

Florence Syme-Buchanan
from Tipani, 1991

Here we are, our mongrel selves
Claiming prestige, sitting on forgotten shelves

This is my culture, believe me please
But don't forget the folding fees

I am Polynesian, think me proud
Not really drunken, abusive and loud

I'll tell where I'm from, right back
When I remember vague and forgotten facts

This is I and now sold
My fate is known and fortune told.

Ta'akura

Makiuti Tongia
from Te Rau Maire, 1992

You are dead
gone.
Your spirit is in Avaiki
feeding on spirit men
and sons
True, your beauty was known
to men from distant shores
from ariki blood
and priestly robes
From aging warriors
and sons not yet
men.

Tapa cloth carefully beaten
Woven mats in turmeric
colours
A house of men
tired
wandering
lost.
They came to find you –
at Paringaru
Tikioki
Maungaroa
Maunga Piko
They came to find you
at stolen moments
in quiet motel rooms
But, you are not here
This is our world
our playground of dreams
our spoken world
of madness.

In the Tivaevae

Vaine Rasmussen
from Te Rau Maire, 1992

My mother sews her love
into each stitch
That joins the tivaevae pattern
to the backbone

My mother is not educated
if going to school is the criterion
But she has sewn ten tivaevae
for her ten children

My mother has never worked
for money
Preferring to till the soil
to feed our mouths

My mother knows the moon,
the tides, the seasons,
Planning her time between
home and field

Her parting words with
each tivaevae distributed
Is "I am with my children
whenever they sleep".



A short story by
Johnny Frisbie

From Nuanua, 1995

Make no mistake, the bed belongs to Rere who has gone to New Zealand to become a nurse. We all know this, but she is far away and her sister, Vaerua, sleeps in it now. She proudly refers to it as 'Toku roki akaperepere'. She loves this treasured bed so dearly she actually sleeps in it.

On our island some beds are treated with reverence, as one would a delicate tiare blossom. They are largely ornamental, often unused for their normal function, the owner sleeping on a cool pandanus mat on the floor beside it.

Rere's bed, in this intimate village, is typical. Its heavy, cast-iron frame is bent and rusted. But it is lovingly covered with a tivaevae, a colourful hand-embroidered version of the ubiquitous patchwork quilt. The pillows are encased in hand-sewn, multicoloured cases, and propped neatly against the headboard for everyone to admire. Laid side by side in formal display on the bed are stiffly starched clothes, coconut-fibre hats, and an assortment of seashell leis. Other objects of less value are stored away in boxes under the bed: used razor blades and pocket knives, blunt needles and discoloured threads, rusty fishhooks from Japan and layers upon layers of chipped enameled plates from China.

Every morning while the family sleeps, Vaerua routinely emerges from the jumbled mass of the kapok mattress, wraps a pareu around her thick waist and makes up the bed by patting and moulding the scattered cotton wool back into the centre. The mound that is formed is then evenly distributed by smacking it forcefully with a pliable coconut broom. Vaerua then covers the mattress with the beautiful hand-embroidered red, white and royal blue tivaevae, her large breasts touching the bedspread, and gently and lovingly she supports them with one plump arm.

Having arranged the tivaevae to her satisfaction, sometimes she becomes disenchanted with the position of the bed in the small square room and must ask the aid of two or more strong men of the village to shift it. As they help, the men usually take advantage of the opportunity to tease her with half playful but nevertheless hopeful remarks.

"E Vaerua, e. When will you share this fine bed with me again? I recall this to be a very receptive mattress, don't you agree?"

As she is good-natured, Vaerua will laugh, covering her dark freckled face with graceful fingers. Then, tightly securing the knot of her pareu as if to say "Keep your hands off", she will reply. "Te witoki i te tama nei. The only thing a cheeky fellow like you could woo is the next door witch's old hen!"

The men join in the merriment, and soon the bed is shifted to Vaerua's satisfaction.

Vaerua is not the libertine these remarks might suggest. In fact, she is really quite sober and hard-working. Not only that, she has had only one lover. Everybody in the village admits that Vaerua is a lovely girl of the most obvious femininity, and that the men cannot be blamed for their wishful teasing.

She is at work by seven o'clock every morning Monday through to Friday. She is proud to be the housemaid for two important neighbors from New Zealand, washing chinaware daily, and hanging out to dry imported garments that are not seen elsewhere on the island.

"One day I will have clothes just like the ones I washed today. I will sit in a private living-room by the seashore, counting the waves breaking over the reef, greeting the early morning sun with a song. I will own an icebox, full of everything they have, including ice. It will be a fine change from the usual village fare of tea, cabin bread and tinned beef."

She devotes Saturdays to cleaning her room, the most important ritual being to strip the bed and carry the mattress outside to air and dry. She then cleans under the bed, and spends considerable time wondering what to do with the many treasures belonging to her sister: those treasures recall many seasons past, and Vaerua must not discard them even to make way for her own things.

One Saturday afternoon, while the village men are away at sea fishing, women gather around the burning umu in the weekly ritual of preparing the Sunday banquet. A chattering of many voices emerges from the smoke, sounding like the evening cacophony of the mynah birds in the mighty purau tree.

"That bed is not well cared for these days," says one in a malicious tone.

"You ought to see it. There are days when it is left unmade."

"Yes, you are right. Rere saved long and hard to buy her bed," crows another smoke-filtered voice. "Sometimes, I see dirty clothes on it, for no reason at all except that Vaerua is insensitive. I'll have to write Rere, and tell her how the bed is being mistreated."

A pause, and then another whispering voice, sly and confiding. "She embraces the young man from the upper village in that bed, I swear. I hear giggles that are not the result of dreams. Lucky wench!"

"Yes, I too, admit that I am envious," retorted another.

As such gossips are common around the umu, little importance is given to them.

Soon after this therapeutic exercise, the radio warns of an enormous hurricane approaching. The European community scurry to secure the roofs of their square houses with heavy ropes, and to fill numerous containers with water against the rains that would fill all plumbing with discoloured water mingled with gravel, remnants of roots, and earthworms. The villagers, however, leave their thatched-roof houses unprotected, for they would be easy enough to rebuild. Instead, they climb the swaying coconut trees, trimming off superfluous fronds so the trees might offer less resistance to the wind and survive. This done, they strip the village cookhouses of any boards suitable for surfing and watch eagerly the darkening sky over the rising, fervent sea.

When the barometer drops, tempers have ways of flaring up. In particular, the temperamental matriarch of the household next door is suspicious of the activities of one of her many boarders, a girl of twenty, who is Vaerua's third cousin. These suspicions involve her own husband, and the matriarch, prompted by the brewing hurricane, decides that her health is suffering from sleeplessness caused by the constant vigil necessary to keep a nightly watch.

She would solve the problem by ejecting the girl!

There is a sudden eruption of thundering verbal abuse, and the animated villagers quickly gather in the village square to be entertained.

The angry matriarch is storming, bellowing to be heard in the gusty competing winds.

“You are a tramp. You can’t keep your dirty hands off other women’s men. Leave my husband alone or I’ll pluck out your hair. A naked hen you’ll end up to be.”

The inspired third cousin spits in rebuttal, ejecting the saliva towards the trembling red-faced matriarch, then turns and strides slowly and confidently across the open square, dragging behind a bundle of bedclothes.

“Puaka matu, like Iro’s fat pig!” she shouts for all to hear, simultaneously thrusting out her right hip. “You say I slept with your equally fat husband, but you have never caught us together, not yet.” She thrusts outward her favourite hip again, while pulling up her skirt, exposing a bare brown bottom.

Then, feeling that she had put enough distance between herself and her antagonist, she throws the bundle of bedclothes dramatically to the ground and makes as if to sleep there; waiting, as well, for someone to offer her lodging and protection from the impending hurricane.

Vaerua, who has seen it all, takes pity on her relation for she herself had once been thrown out of the matriarch’s house, but by the husband, who felt he had not been shown the proper attention. Although she does not have a house of her own, she could offer to share her bed, and this suggestion the cunning cousin quickly accepts.

As often seems to happen after a warning, the hurricane does not come after all. But Vaerua’s third cousin stays on, and soon the tone of the women’s voices around the umu takes a new bitterness.

“That wretched night owl – sleeping on Rere’s bed! That vampire. E tamaine ori aere ua. She has enough fire between her legs to scorch every man on earth.”

So, when the monthly Taveuni weighs anchor for Auckland, in addition to its cargo of canned orange juice, green bananas and copra, it carries the fat woman’s letter describing in detail the village drama of the past week.

The reply comes the following month, addressed not to the fat woman, but to Vaerua.

“Dear Sister,” Rere writes, “news has come from a notable gossip (the name I shall withhold since you know who she is, anyways) that you have committed an unforgiveable sin by allowing a certain siren to sleep in my bed. (Our mother would certainly turn to her grave.) I am so angry at you I can’t seem to find the right words to continue with this sad letter. Therefore, dear younger sister, bend to me now so we may kiss in conclusion.”

“I have been wrong in allowing you to sleep in her bed,” Vaerua confesses in the midst of continuous sobbing. “I will ask my lady boss to find you a bed of your own. You must agree to sleep on the floor from now on. I have wronged my sister.”

It is not long before the third cousin is informed that she will soon possess a bed of her own. She immediately begins describing the bed she envisages: a luxurious four-poster, a double bed, decorated at the top with frilly white lace. In short, one like Rere’s. She is relieved to know that she will no longer have to sit out in the dark, or turn her back, when Vaerua welcomes her lover from the nearby village.

Alas, there is absolutely no room left in the house for another mammoth bed, nor is there enough money in the collection for such a bed. The third cousin does not seem worried by this lack of money and proudly hands over the remaining balance the very next day. The total is now enough to purchase a plain but sturdy army bunk which the third cousin immediately places next to the window facing the house of the matriarch. There is some speculation as to where the money comes from, and indeed, the matriarch creates another vitriol when she discovers her monthly bread money is gone.

However, as everyone happily agrees, the third cousin now has a bed of her own and Vaerua will no longer be criticized by the village gossips.

And while the third cousin is experiencing new joy, Vaerua consoles her troubled heart in silence, for her lover has been frightened off by the unusual attention recently paid to the bed, and some nights have passed during which he failed to appear. Her fears have grown that she has lost her chance to marry. She even takes to sleeping on the floor as an act of punishment, while the bed stands alone, unruffled, in its royal grandeur.

Naturally, this distressing digression cannot exist for long. Vaerua's lover returns some nights later, on a specially selected evening, when the moon lends little light. First, he must enter the sleeping house without noise, and to accomplish this feat he must further prove his prowess by leaping stealthily like a goat over the pebble path to the doorway. He succeeds, landing with a light and gentle thud on the concrete floor. Several of the discerning insomniacs are relieved that the lovers have united and they lie in anticipatory silence for their rewards, which come immediately. There are whispering exchanges of an affectionate nature, followed by the lusty sounds of smacking lips, in Rere's bed.

These nightly trysts have continued, and everyone knows about them now. But, as these particularly unique villagers are seldom anxious to disrupt the excitement created by a successful secret love affair, and since it is a foregone conclusion that the lovers are going to marry as soon as the unborn baby makes itself known, no one wishes to inform Rere. Even the matriarch is silent, for her favorite hen now nests on the bed by day, and this gives Vaerua some power over her, until the day the chicks are hatched.

My Mother's Coat

Ta'i George
from *Our Place in the Sun*, 1998

As a child
I felt protected and warm
Wrapped
in my mother's coat
It must have looked funny
Big brown eyes
Peering from its folds
As if that was all there was
to me

I remember
Its unique threads
Unusual and coarse
Their slenderness
belied their strength
Its tivaevae-like panels
of thin fabric
An effective shield
against bitter winters
The colours loud
Shouting for attention
and space

My mother always wore
her coat with pride
Unfazed
by its highlighter effect
Marking her out
in a Papaā crowd
But blending beautifully
at every putuputuanga

I remember too
With youthful disdain
Discarding my mother's coat
Not for me

The uncool design
extravagant colouring
and awkward fit
I did not want
To be marked
If only
I knew then
What I know now

She wears it still
Her brooch of pride
brilliant and bright
And not long ago
I tried it on
after many years
Although it's not really me
It's because of her
I can sew
My own

Akauruuru

Michael Tavioni
from Speak Your Truth, 2002

E te tama Ariki
Akarongo mai koe
Ko taku karakia kare e topa
E iki i te Ariki, ka iki iki i te Ariki
Kua tika i te kau Ariki o Papa
Nga pa Atua e noo maira i Orongo
E ipu vai kura na te kau ta'unga no Opoa
E io i te po, e io i te ao
To mata kute i muri i to maro kura
E rei kura tarere i te varovaro
To parekura, to pare Ariki
E akaariki e.....maeva

Akarongo mai e te Ariki
Ko taau raurau ko taku raurau
To omii puaka, to tamua meika
Tetai naau tetai na to matakeinanga
Te matiroeroe, te takaua, e te ivi
E koukou koe ki raro i to keke
Maeva e te ariki.

Investiture

English translation of 'Akauruuru'
Michael Tavioni
from Speak Your Truth, 2002

To you the royal prince
You listen
My prayer will not falter
A chief shall be chosen, the chief will be invested
All the chiefs of the earth have approved
The row of Gods residing at Orongo
The sacred cup of water from the priests of Opoa
The lord and power of night, the lord and power of day
Your red eye behind your royal loin cloth
The royal necklace that swings in the void
Your royal headgear, your chiefly crown
Exalt...the chief has been crowned

Now listen my chief
Your food basket, my food basket also
Your pig head and your bunch of bananas
Some for you, some for your tribe
The destitute, the widows and the rest
Gather them under your armpit.
Exalt the chief.

Tanu iaku ki toku Ipukarea

Michael Tavioni
from *Speak Your Truth*, 2002

Nga mea paunu
Peke te tiketi
No te tere i te Moana Roa
Te pai ki te moemoea
I te enua o te u e te meri

Kua aere te tuatau
Ngata katoa te tapu mai i te moni
Tupara takiri te manako oki ki te ipukarea
Ko te are tei moemoea iana kua riro ei tupapaku
E te aite i te oraanga tau tikai kua roroma

Ko te ata o Akarana toku ia ngutuare teia nei
Ki ketaketa te tai i te au pai
Piripiri katoa oki te au are
Ngaro katoa toku tuatau 'au maru
Aue te manotini o te tangata

Akaruke au te ngutuare i mua ake i te itianga ra
Angaanga atu e aiai uatu
Ko te opuanga ra te taki iaku ki te ngutuare
Akaruke akaou au te ngutuare i mua ake i te iti
anga o te ra
Ko te akataka anga teia o te oraanga i teia enua

Rere viviki uatu te au mataiti
Kua anga akaou te manava i tetai kororomotu
Tetai nga mataiti akaou
Kua rava i reira te puapinga no te oki
I reira toku kopu tangata e ngakauparau ei iaku

I te Orange Ballroom te pae ia Symonds St
Ki ketaketa i toku iti tangata aiteite ua te
moemoea
I reira au kite ei i taku purotu
Kare oki i roa kua akaipoipo
Kua nunui te anau e kua akaruke i te ngutuare
Aue, kua tae akaou te taime no te 'rent'

E tai tama kua mou i te pakati o te Black Power
Tetai tamaine kua akaipoipo i tona tungane kopu
tangata
Kare oki i kite i to raua pirianga
Ko te tamaine ra e aao titia ana
Kua akaipoipo i te papaa
E oraanga meitaki tona

Kare uarai e puapinga no te apai kite ipukarea
Ko toku ra kua waitata roa i te opu
Kua motu takere ana te akatakaanga oraanga
Ko ai oki te aere ki te angaanga i te akiata
E te oki ki te ngutuare i te opunga o te ra
Tei roto ua au i te kakau moe i te au ra
katoatoa
Ko te T.V. kua kino, te akara matariki
ua maira iaku

Te anu nei toku nga vaevae
Kua akatoka toku manako
Ko taku moemoea kua pueu rikiriki
Eaa taku tarevake i rave?
Te kapiki ma te pati akatenga mai nei toku
pukuatu
Tanu iaku ki toku ipukarea
I reira te auai anu toketoke no roto mai i te vaa
Kia ngaro ke atu te reira

Bury me in the Islands

English translation of 'Tanu iaku ki toku Ipukarea'
Michael Tavioni, from *Speak Your Truth*, 2002

A few pounds
A ticket
A Moana Roa voyage
The vehicle to dreams
To the land of milk and honey

Time slips by
But the money never lingers
Thoughts of returning home fade
My dream house is now a ghost
And my life of comfort diminishes

The skyline of Auckland is now my home
The waters overflowing with boats
Houses packed together
All privacy gone
Wow, so many people

Left home before sunrise toiled all day
The setting sun guides me home
Dinner, TV and then to sleep
Left home before sunrise
The cycle goes on

Ma'ukean Childhood

Jean Tekura'i'imoana Mason
from Whetu Moana, 2003

Where rock-daisies stalked
The thicket like tigers
Burning brightly in the grass;

Where a swim in the water
Of cool chasm-pools
Was heaven after a hot day's play;

Where ni'oi leaves
And the ubiquitous kikau
Was a jew's harp in our mouths and hands;

Where the sweet scent of mata'oi
Intoxicated all our senses
In the bright afternoons;

Where we scraped our knees and hearts
In the makatea chasing mene'une in the flowers
Of the crawling pumpkin vine;

Where our chins and memories were indelibly
Stained by cashew-apples on our way home
From 'Araro;

Where time-worn limestone trails
Behind grandfather's house
Were aglow with spectral fishermen
Dragging their paiere down to the sea at night.

Where my child with the blue eyes
Sparkling like jewels on the ocean
Plays on the shining sand
Where once I played.

...will the land of my tupuna consume her
like it does me?
...how can I forget it even in my dreams?

Dreams of Takuvaine Road

Alistair Te Ariki Campbell
from 'Cook Islands Rhapsodies' in Just Poetry, 2007,
reprinted Collected Poems, 2016

Sleep walking in Rarotonga – island
of haunted peaks, coral white churches,
wayside graves, flamboyantes in full
blossom, staining the roads blood red –
sleep walking, I find myself again
in Takuvaine Road where long ago
we lived as children. There was laughter,
there was singing, there were tears.
But the house has been pulled down,
the childish voices silenced,
and the dream fades like sea mist
at dawn, when suddenly it turns cold.

At the Farewell Dinner, Rarotonga

Alistair Te Ariki Campbell
from 'Cook Islands Rhapsodies' in Just Poetry, 2007,
reprinted Collected Poems, 2016

A marquee on Manuia Beach; night
pressing down on the canvas,
as we dine; tupapaku swarming
from tapu places on the island,
but kept at bay by powerful tupuna
from Tongareva. Darkness falls off
them in scales as they appear
in a blaze of light and as quickly
vanish...Unnerved I turn to cousin
Tangaroa, who reminds me of our
first meeting. 'When I kissed you,
our ancestors passed before my
eyes. My wife was scared when I
told her. Now here they are
summoned by your poems. Don't be
afraid – they come to honour you.'
And so under their aura, all evening
we eat and drink, make speeches
laugh, enjoying each other's
company. Too soon the party ends,
and I sense the tapu lifting
as we embrace and say goodbye.

Turakina Street

Jean Tekura'i'imoana Mason
from Mauri Ola, 2010

1. Uru (nee Mouauri) Anthony, a Ma'uke woman living in Grey Lynn, Auckland, 1964

I give you these baskets and ei
made by my hands in the old style
from plastic packing strips
my way of keeping alive those ties to home
in this land not my own
there are no pandanus leaves here
but there are jobs for me and all my brothers and sisters
we will send you what we can, when we can
we catch buses everyday
and we clock in every morning
the hours are long but the pay is good
you may cut the pandanus I planted as a girl
and we will exchange our crafts when next we meet
my sister, my husband and I
and all our children
live at Turakina Street
we still make pai every Sunday and share it with all the clan

2. Uru's daughter, Jacinta, 1985

Ma'uke follows me like a shadow
to the new country
Mum took our son's afterbirth and buried it under a tree
and he will have a life filled with good fortune
I listened to my mother and saved my money
and married a good man and we bought a brick and tile house in the suburbs
I have learned to cook island meals
and European ones too
I have a European education so I don't have to work long hours
in a hot kitchen or laundry
we don't have open-house every Sunday
but my husband and I we share mum's values
we eat pai occasionally –
when we take the kids to mum's place
at Turakina Street

3. Uru's grandson, Ben, 1992

I have lots of friends at school, of all races and religions
I love playing with the children and visiting Nana's
and playing with my cousins and listening to the old women tell stories
about Ma'uke
My great uncles tease me and call me names in Ma'ukean
I eat all kinds of nice food at home
but I love pai at Nana's best of all
at Turakina Street

Tango

Michael Greig
from Mauri Ola, 2010

Why do you dance the Tango, Uncle?
It is not culturally appropriate, not PC for PIs.

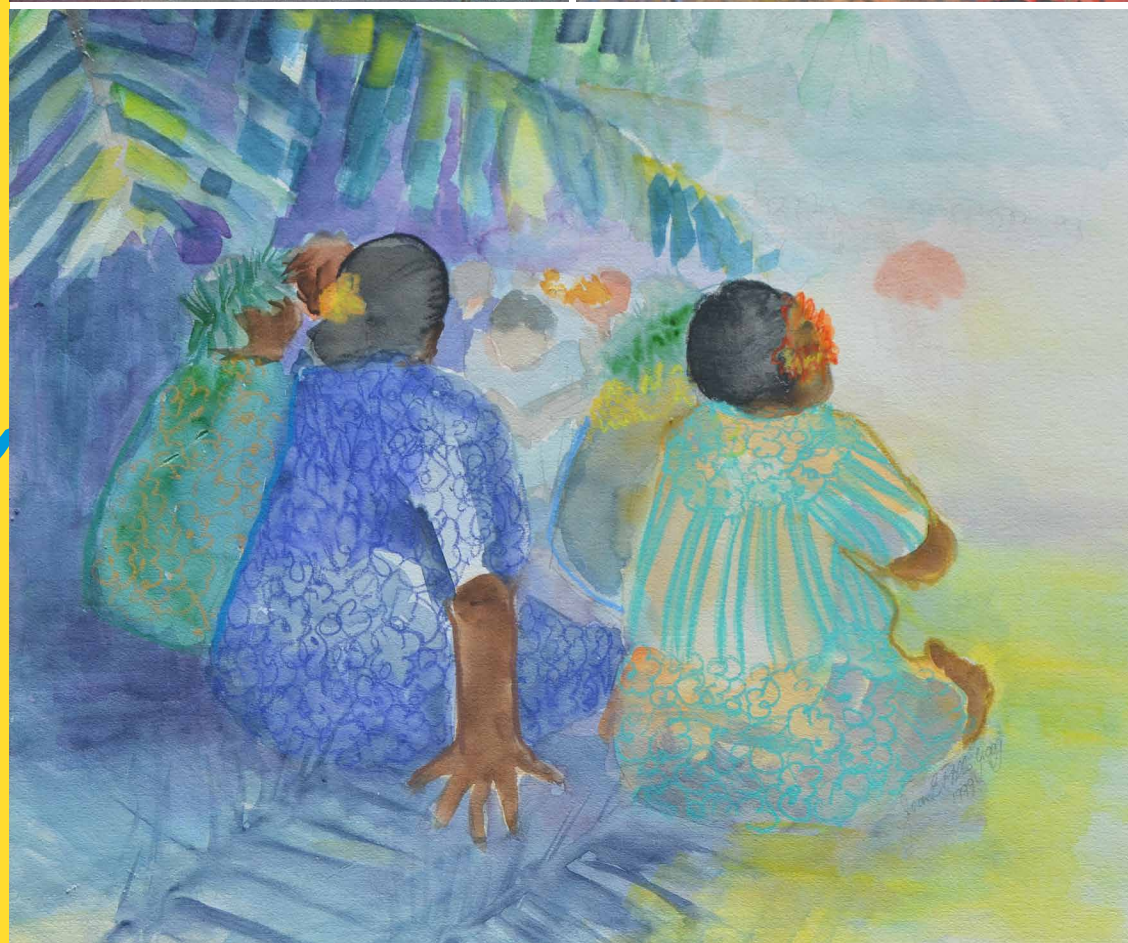
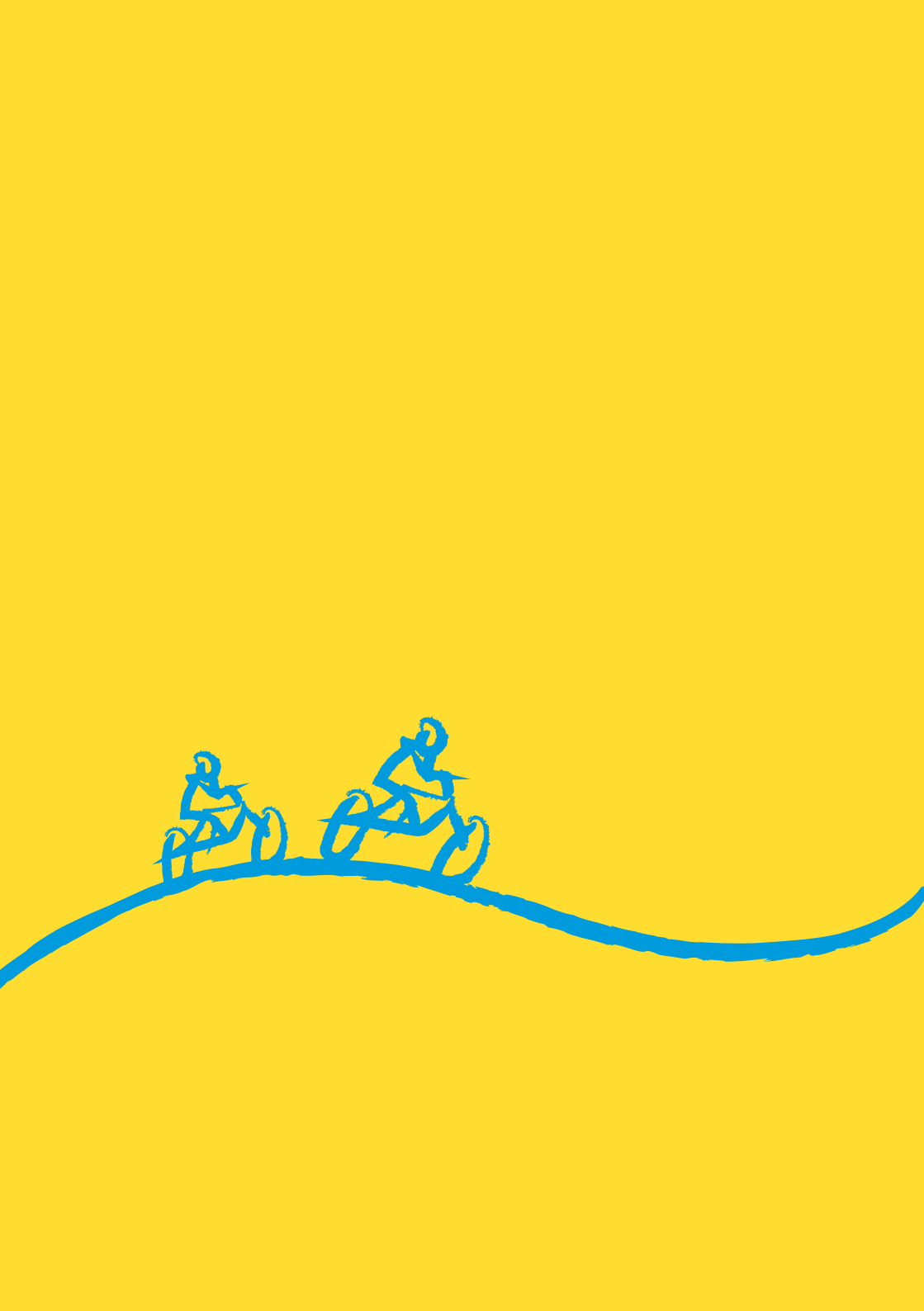
I dance in memory for the past, the lost, those taken by
the Blackbirders, like Koria on Rakahanga, and those
from Tongareva lost to the slavers from Peru.

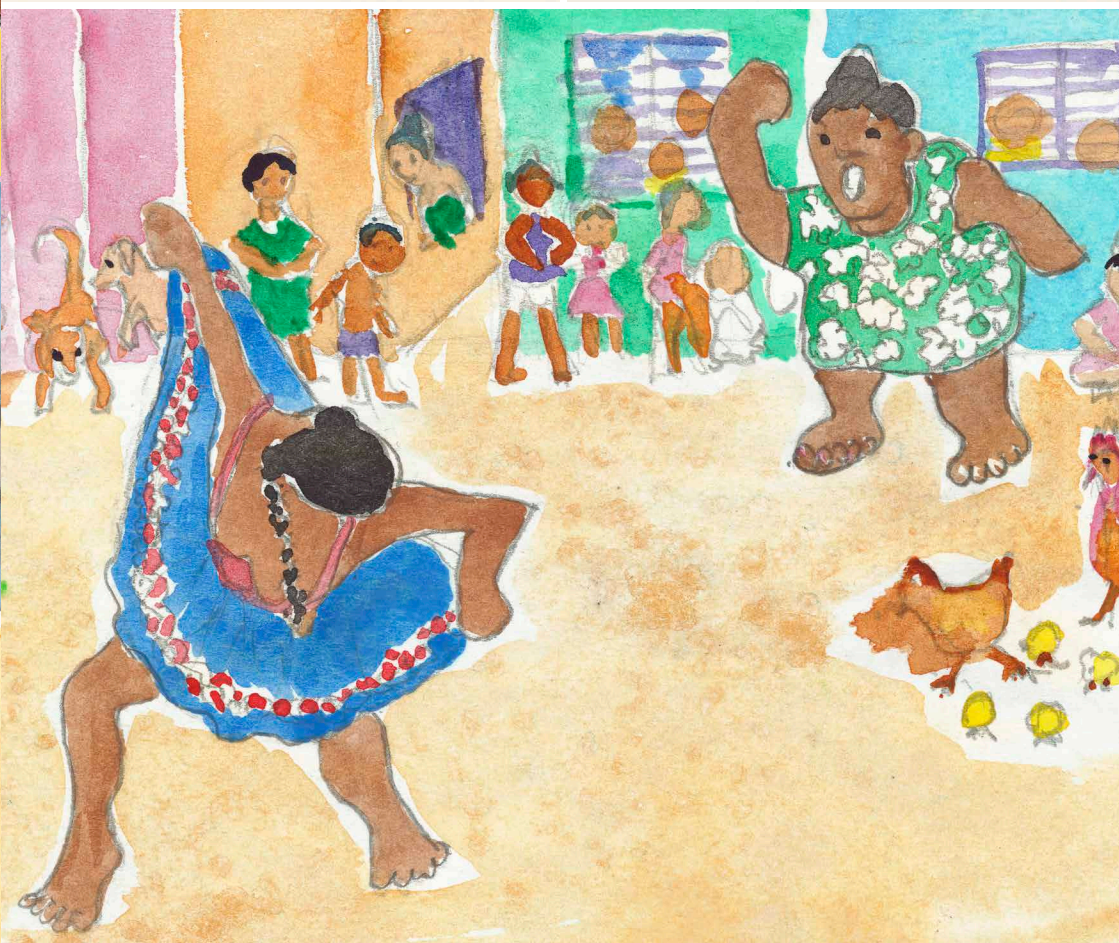
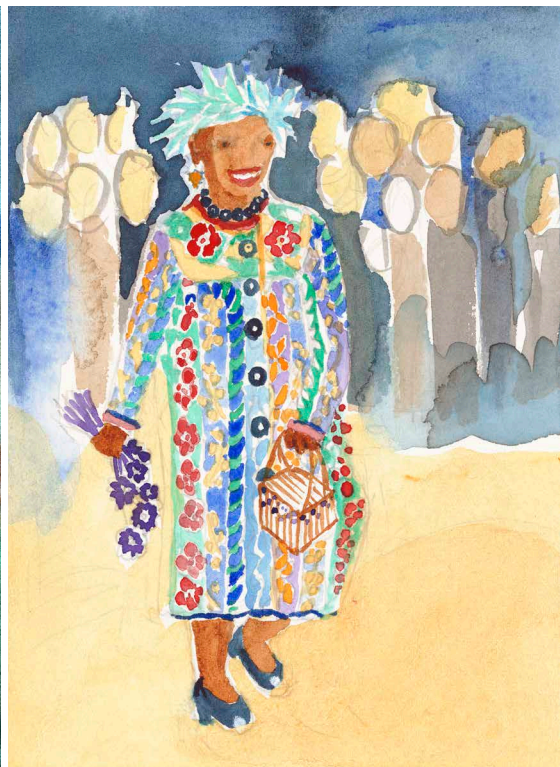
In a far off land removed from the light and pleasant
breeze that makes the fronds of the coconut planted by Hiuku
dance, 'Aue, Tera paa te Uru avatea,
Te fahirihiri i te maru o Araiava?

Now generations later, where is the contact with these
our family, separated in time, in distance but connected
in loss, souls searching for identity?

Tango was the dance that evolved with the dispossessed
and lost. We merge with the melancholy of the music,
the words, the beat, and the melody.
With eyes closed and in close embrace we seek that
moment of escape to that perfect Tango moment.
A Zen moment of detachment, seeking, seeking.

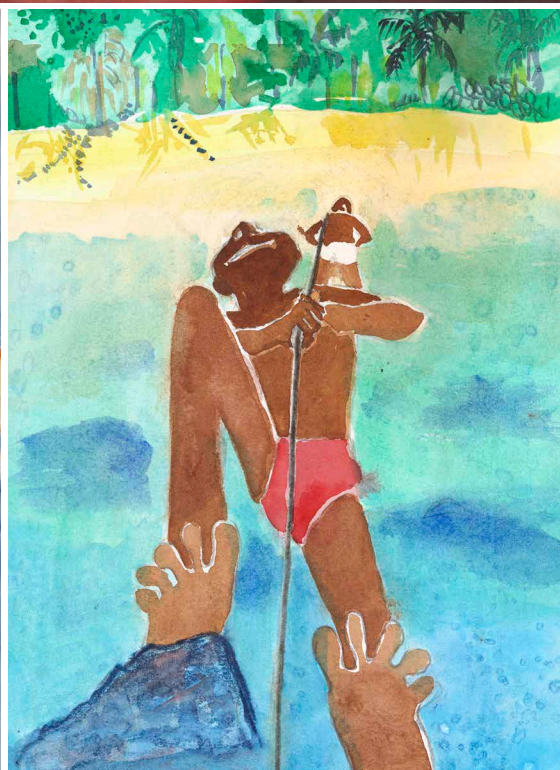
I dance to remember.
I dance to find.







Part two
2001 - 2017



Tuanga
rua

Sketches of Atiu, 2001

Jean Tekura'i'imoana Mason

1

Purple button daisies
In the ei
White coral road to Mapumai
Past pitipitiō trees
Loaded with fruit
A dog runs alongside the pickup
truck
All the way from the airport

2

Déjà vu!
A kikau shack
On the mound
In the swamp
Taro patches
As far as the eye can see

3

Under a mango tree
A fat pig pulling on a rope
Roger says it's named after the
island's MP,
It's begging to be fed

4

A nice young man
Called Norman
Hauls my motorbike out of a ditch
While I nurse my scraped shins

5

A hardworking man
A bunch of green bananas
On his shoulders
Struggles up hill
Te'enui

6

A goat
Tethered to a hedge
Hopelessly entangled
All I can do
Is break off more leaves
For it to eat

7

Red earth
In the pine hills
Steep slopes
In the rain forest
A lake

8

An old man called Sun
Hitches a ride
Grabs my breasts
I dump him
On the roadside at Ziona
A blonde tourist woman
Laughing
Says the same thing
Happened to her

9

At Te Pari
Salty sea spray in the air
Waves crash
And lash the rocks
Trying to drag us
Into the deep blue
Illusion
The ocean looks
Higher than the land

10

On a Sunday drive
The beach
Where one Easter
A woman was swept out to sea
Never to be seen again –
Let that be a lesson to all, says
Tangata –
No fishing – not just on Sundays
But on ALL sacred days

11

The road around the island
Is overgrown
No one left to clean it I'm told
They're all in New Zealand
The pigs have run wild
Rooting the grassy verges

12

Mile-a-minute covered paiēre
Abandoned on the rocks
Old trails disappear
In the undergrowth

kura'au

Jean Tekura'i'imoana Mason

the house still stands by itself
at the top of kimiangatau
away from the rest of family lands
your garden overtaken by weeds long ago
save for the hawaiian wedding bell vines
on a converted four-poster bed
flowering in profusion

strewn on the floor in what was your living room
pictures of a dead, adopted son
in his scoutmaster's uniform
vessel of all your hopes and dreams
but no pictures of you – i barely remember your face
louvre-frames still in their crates
speak of unfinished tasks
faded picture of the virgin still on the wall
speaks of your faith
your dreams they fall away in cracked paint, decay and dust

gentle and soft-spoken great uncle
named for the cursed vaka
that hit the rocks and nearly didn't make it to aotearoa
mum told us never to pass your bad luck name
to any of our children

the smiles of long ago
the din of familiarity
finding itself at christmas
under the passionfruit vines on your verandah
memories of when we were all together
in one place at one time

who is the stranger in the side room
sleeping it off,
is he looking after your house now
not by the look of it

Sonde

Mariana Powell
Written in Palmerston Island English

Sonde was e good de
Un Sonde was Mama's spacal de
She'll get op arly in de mornin
Wush er, Drass er
Un poot planti sents on er
Un den she'll weit
Iviri Sonde Papaiaia'll sen somwon
To come un get er on dea paddle bike
Fis not Joel or Charle, e'll be Tom
Tom or Parerima or Big Man
Un sometime e'll be Gigi or Dori Dori.
In dem des we got no car or machine bike
We onle got e paddle bike

Un dem paddle bike was more betta
Den dees cars toode.
Wee'l oll weit wis er for er drivar to get
Boot we noin she's fred of dut bike
Boot eel neva se
Pekose she wontin to go so bard to see er fumly in Kakirori
Un egen, is e Sonde.

When er drivar al get
She'l climb on de bike
Un is like is e very hard sing for er to get on dat bike

Sunday was a good day
And Sunday was Mama's special day
She would get up early in the morning
Wash, dress
And put on lots of perfume
And then she would wait
Every Sunday Papaiaia would send someone
To come and get her on their pedal bike
If it wasn't Joel or Charlie, it would be Tom
Tom or Parerima or Big Man
And sometimes it would be Gigi or Dori Dori.
In those days we didn't have a car or motorbike
We only had a pedal bike

And that pedal bike was better
Than these cars today.
We would all wait for her driver to arrive
But we knew that she was afraid of that bike
But she would never say
Because she wanted to go so badly to see the family in Kakirori
And after all, it was Sunday.

When her driver arrived
She'd climb onto that bike
And it was like a very hard thing for her to get onto that bike

She'l ketch dut undle so tight
Un tromp er un
joos like er un is fawl on it.

Dus de time won of oos ull coll to it
"Mama look aut, you might shinga down!"
Dus awa joke to er.
Un she'l coll, "E, e, hol of via, get ewe."
Un soon us de won on de bike ul start to
paddle
She'l se, "E e e, o o o look aut"
Oh dia Mama,
Like she's de sar of dut bike.
Un den when som won
ul bring ar buk in de nite
She'l be so appi singin dem hims
she been singin
Un token what so eva dey been token

Fi I sink of dem young mapus
in dem des
Not shem to tek awa Grunmodda
on dea bike,
Dus e reely Sonde Blassin
for awa Grunmodda!

She would grab that handle so tightly
And squeeze so hard
As if her hand was stuck on to it.

That's when one of us would call to her
"Mama look out, you might fall down!"
That was our joke to her.
And she'd call, "Hey hey, all of you,
get away"
And as soon as the one on the bike would start to pedal
She'd say, "E e e o o o look out"
Oh dear Mama,
Like she's in charge of that bike.
And then when someone
would bring her back at night
She was so happy singing those hymns
she'd been singing
And talking about whatsoever they'd been talking about

If I think of the young men
in those days
Not embarrassed to take our grandmother
on their bike
That was really a Sunday blessing
for our grandmother.

Parmoston

Mariana Powell

Awa Grunmodda toul me about William Marsters
Awa Mam un awa Farda been tellin oos about Parmoston

I neva been to Parmoston
I neva been see Parmoston
Boot I been to Parmoston srew my art

Fee I get dee'e
Can I see de maunten?
Can I see de taro patch?
Can I see de oul school?

Sondere de sing
My fumili dee'e wornt no me pecos I'm oul
Un egen, will I no dem pecos I'm oul
I got to get to Parmoston.

I'm too let nau to see de oul charch
I'm too let nau to see de oul aus
I'm too let nau to drink from de wal.
Un wees de tatl un de tatl eg?
Wees de motin un de borson bad?

Oo dea!
I got to get to Parmoston.
I got to let de win blo in my seil.

Palmerston

English translation of 'Parmoston'
Mariana Powell

Our Grandmother told me about William Marsters
Our Mother and our Father have told us about Palmerston

I haven't been to Palmerston
I haven't seen Palmerston
But I've been to Palmerston in my heart

If I get there
Can I see the mountain?
Can I see the taro patch?
Can I see the old school?

The only thing is
My family, they won't know me because I am old
And then again, will I know them, because I am old
I've got to get to Palmerston.

I'm too late now to see the old church
I'm too late now to see the old house
I'm too late now to drink from the well.
Where's the turtle and the turtle egg?
Where's the mutton and the bosun bird?

Oh dear!
I've got to get to Palmerston.
I've got to let the wind blow in my sail.



A short story by
Ina Papatua

Tiuni, 2017

I tōku tamariki'anga e noo ana au e tōku kōpū tangata i roto i te tapere Kāvera i roto i te oire Arorangi. E tangata Mangaia tōkū pāpā, o toku mama ra, no Arorangi aia, e no reira oki matou i noo ai i reira. E reka ana au i te noo i Arorangi nōte mea e waitata ua teia ngai i te pae tai, e e aere ua ana mātou o tōku au taeake i te takātai. Mē takātai matou i tetai au taime, e rua taime i te ra. I tētai au taime nei, e kimi'ia ana matou e to matou au metua e, e pokarakara ia ana to matou taringa.

Ia tae i tētai rā, ia oki mai māua o tau māmā mei te apii mai i Arorangi, ua tūoro mai tau pāpā iaku. Poiterere au no te mea i te au taime katoatoa āore aia e oki vave mai ana i te kainga. I tēia rā ra, ia tae atu māua i te kāinga, teia aia e noo nei i raro i te pū raparapa i mua i tō mātou are. Ia tae atu au i te pae iaia, ua mau mai aia i toku rima, ē ua uti atu iaku i te pae iaia. Ua ta noo aia iaku i raro e teia toona reo.

“E Bob, auua koe e poiterere. Ua oti ia maua o mama i te uriuri e, ka aere tatou i Mangaia noo ai. Ua rava rai te noo i Rarotonga nei.”

I taua taime rai ua akamata toku kopapa i te ru, e ua akamata toku roimata i te ta'e. Te inangaro nei au i te oro, inara, aore e papu ana iaku e, me ka oro au i ia, me i roto i to mātou are, me i ko i te kainga o toku mama ruau, me i roto i te one maniota.

Penei, ua kite toku papa i taku e manako nei, e ua viviki aia, i te mau piri i toku nga rima ma te tano'o iaku i runga iaia.

Ia puera mai toku mata tei runga au i toku ngai moe, e toku papa e moe nei i runga i te nooanga i te pae iaku. I te kite anga au i toku papa ua akamata akaou au i te aue. I teia taime ua aue ngao au e are au e tāpū i toku aue ia kite toku papa e, e aka riri toku iaia. Iaku e aue nei te tara katoa nei au i toku manako iaia.

“Eaa tatou ka aere ai i Mangaia? Are au i kite i tena enua, ka akapeea i reira toku au taeake. Ka akapeea i reira to tataou are e te pai taro, e te puaka a mama ruau?”

Ia kakaro atu au i toku papa, ua kite atu au i tona roimata e ta'eta'e ua ra, e na te reira i aki mai iaku e te aue ra aia. Ua riro teia ei matakua anga noku, no te mea aore au e kite ana iaia i te aue. Ua neke atu au i te pae iaia ma te takave iaia. Ua mau mai rai aia iaku, e ua aue kapipiti maua. Are e papu meitaki ana iaku e, eaa aia i aue ai, penei no toku tu e taku i rave. Are katoa au e inangaro i te ui iaia no te mea, ua kite au e,

noku i aue ai aia. Mei taua ra mai, e tae ua atu i te ra i akaruke ai matou ia Rarotonga aore rava au i aka'ari akaou ana iaia i toku inangaro kore i te aere i Mangaia noo ai, inara tei roto ua tei reira i toku ngakau.

E rua marama i miri mai ua akaruke au, e toku nga metua, toku tuaine e toku teina ia Rarotonga. Aore au e aki atu i tei tupu i roto i tera rua marama no te mea e aka angaanga tei raveia ana i te teateamamao ia matou no te aere i Mangaia. Taku ua ka rauka i te aki atu oia oki, ua akaruke toku nga metua i ta raua ngai angaanga moni. Toku papa i tana angaanga i runga i te are maki i roto i te tuanga o te vairakau e te toto. Ua akaruke katoa toku metua vaine i tana angaanga puapui i roto i te apii tua tai o Arorangi.

E Tāpati te rā i akarūke ai tō mātou pa'i i te ava i Rarotonga. Ua pau mai te kōpū tangata o tōku metua vaine i te aravei ia matou. Ua aue pū 'ua mātou katoatoa i taua rā, e e ngao rāi te au tangata kē atu tei tae mai. Tetai pae, e au taeake angaanga no toku nga metua. Tētai pae ia ratou ua poitirere i ta toku nga metua i rave, inara o raua rai tei kite i te tumu i rave ei raua i te reira, oau ra, e toru mataiti i muri mai i kite tikai ai au i te tumu i akaruke ei matou ia Rarotonga. Ua maromaroa tikai au i te akaruke anga te pai Tiare Taporo i te ava i Avarua e ua tu ua au i miri i te pai ma te tarevareva e te aue i te maaraa ia Arorangi e toku oraanga i reira, toku au taeake, toku mama ruau e to matou kainga. I taua taime rai, ua kite au i tetai mea tuke iaku, oia oki ua akamata toku kopu i te nanenane mei te mea atura e, e apinga tetai i roto ka inangaro i te aere mai i vao. Tei runga au i te pute anani te ngai noo ai, e ite tu anga rai au i runga, ua rere mai te ruaki mei roto i toku va'a i runga i te pute anani. Ua akamata akao au i te aue note mea ka tai au ka ruaki mei teia rai te tu. Aore rava au i moe meitaki ana i te reira po, no te mea te ruaki nei matou katoatoa. Ua aunga ruaki to matou ngai moe, pera katoa to matou parai moe, e te pute urunga.

“Auaa koe e ruaki i runga i tau vaevae,” i na tau teina ai, ma te taka'i mai iaku i tona vaevae.

“E ma, teia Bob e uti nei i tau parai moe,” i na tau tuaine mai ai.

Mei teia rai te marikoanga kore i ta matou moe, e popongi ua atu. Ia ara mai matou i te popongi, te tuoro mai nei tetai mataro o runga i te pai e, ua kitea te enua. Ua orooro atu matou o toku nga taeake i te kakaro. I toku kakaroanga are au i kite vave ana i te enua no te mea ua matau au i te kakaro i te au maunga teitei o Rarotonga. O teia enua i mua, e

enua akaaka ua e te paraaraa, e aore e maunga teitei e te manea mei to Rarotonga rai.

“E Mere aore e manea ana teia enua,” i naku ai i toku tuaine. “Me kakaro, aore e ngao ana te are.”

“Iaa ia manea, te mea ngao are e roa atu ana ua aere tatou i uta i te enua. Te inangaro nei au i te takavai, aunga ruaki ua au no korua o Tua,” i pau mai ra Mere ma te riri.

Ia vaiata atu matou i uta i te enua, ua kite matou e, teatea ua te ngai e pari ra te ngaru i runga i te akau. Ua aere mai to matou papa, e ua ui atu au iaia e eaa te tai i pera ai.

Te kite katoa nei matou i te au toroka e te au patikara e aere mai ra i ko ite ava, inara te noonoo aere ua ra te tangata i te pae tai.

“E ngaru te tai e aore e rauka i te poti i te aere mai i runga i te pai,” i na toku papa ai. “Te openga e moe akao tatou i runga i te pai i teia po.”

Ia tuaero i te reira ra, te ngaru nei rai te tai. Te kite nei matou i te au poti e timata ra i te aere mai i te moana, inara ua takauri tetai e ua pururu te tangata i roto i te tai. O tetai poti, ua tiria i runga i te akau, e ua ati te vaevae o te tangata akaoro. Ua kite matou e, te timata nei rai ratou ia rauka ua te au patete i te apai i uta i te enua, inara aore rai te reira i manuia.

Ua tiki to matou papa i tetai a matou tini varaoa e te pia puatoro ei kai na matou no te mea ua mate matou i te pongi. Ua tiki katoa to matou papa i tetai vai unu no matou no roto i te ngai tuna manga o te pai. Ua tangi te au mataro, e ua ropa mai i tetai ti na matou i taua aiai ra. Marikoanga kore katoa ta matou moe i taua po ra. Aore katoa oki matou katoatoa i takavai ana. I toku manako, ngao atu toku tuatau ara ua, i toku tuatau moe i taua po ra. Te kite katoa nei au i toku teina e takaviriviri nei, pera katoa toku mama, inara noatu e, te ara ua ra matou, aore e tangata inangaro komakoma atu i tetai, note mea ua roiroi e ua maromaroa katoa matou.

“Oi! E tu i runga tera ake te kau e tiki ia tatou.”

Ia kaka mai tau mata aore te akau e teatea akao ana. I taua po ra, ua tau i te matangi e ua mate te tai. Ia tae atu matou i uta i te enua tei uta

te papa e te au teina o toku metua tane i te tiki ia matou. Ua akaei ia matou i te ei poroiti e ua na runga atu matou i te toroka i te aereanga i te kainga o toku papa i Ivirua. Poitirere tikai au note mea i te akaruke anga matou i te ava, aore matou i kite tangata akao ana e tae ua atu matou i te oire Ivirua. Tei reira te ngao anga o te kopu tangata e tiaki nei ia matou. Ua manga akama rai au i te aravei ia ratou, note mea aore oki au i matau ia ratou. I roto i te kopu tangata i te reira ra, e vaine tetai na te teina o tau papa. Ua vaitata teia mama i te anau. I te otianga ta matou kai manga, ua pati toku papa me ka tika me anau teia mama ka inangaro aia i te tapa i te ingoa no matou. Koia oki ko Moemoana, te moeanga matou e rua po ite moana, i to matou oki anga mai i Mangaia nei.

Rendezvous in Tongareva (for Alistair Te Ariki Campbell)

Vaine Rasmussen

The TV news told me
you had
returned
to Tongareva
to be with our
ancestors and
Mama Rongo¹⁴ and
Papa Tangaroa¹⁵ ...
And all those
others
who wept
at Taruia's¹⁶ passage
when foreign policy
took you
away
to live
in a
home for
children
with no
family...

Such a sad
time
for Tongareva
where children
have many families...

While your
Mothers
wept to hold
you to sleep
Cold dark
nights
took your
islandness
from us...

While the rito
grew thick
and white
on Vaiari
Your heart grew
white and cold
in your father's
land...

A wisp of a wind
lifts my hair to my eyes
Is that you
passing?
On your
way
home.

I felt your
warmth
in the verses
you wrote
for Jean and I

I feel it now
as I write these
few words
for you tonight...

Take this chant
to my grandmother
and hug her for
me
when you
arrive
in Savaiki
the land of our night.

*Ko vai te rau ma te kaka¹⁷
Ko vai tini o Ravatangisere
Ko vai te oo o mareva
Ko vai te sau hakatonga ia Hitu ma Heva
Ko vai tea o o Atea ma Hakahotu
Koia ka ea mai ei a Atea ma Hakahotu
Koia ka puta mai ai a Tongareva*

*Who are the leaves and the coconut frond
Who are those in the multitude of Ravatangisere
Who is out there in the open space
Who is that of immense beauty to the south of Hitu and Heva
Who is that who emerges from the world of Atea and Hakahotu
It is the forming of Atea and Hakahotu
It is the place where Tongareva was born*

¹⁴ The writer's grandmother. ¹⁵ Papa Tangaroa Tangaroa, a cousin of Alistair Campbell, who was knighted and became the Queen's Representative in the Cook Islands. ¹⁶ Te ava o Taruia, Taruia's passage is the main passage opening for boats into the Tongareva lagoon and wharf.

¹⁷ Pese provided by Wilkie Rasmussen

Mangaia

Florence Syme-Buchanan
2017

The boat has left
And the plane is about to slice the
sky
Leave
Leave your love behind
Leave it now
Your memories
The oceans will hold your tears
And the land your memories
Like the packed suitcase
Carrying your clothes for
tomorrow
That stayed behind

Akaïro

Jean Tekura'i'imoana Mason
and Akekaro Kairae, 1941-2015

I te mateanga o Tapa'ia i Wellington
Kua kākāōa mai te toa moa e toru taime
I mua i te ku'uta o te are i Kimiangatau
Tuōru atu koe kia aere, inara ko te nuti tumatetenga
Kua ipaipa tona aere anga mai i roto i te rima
O te tangata vaereti
Kua kite takere koe i te akaïro punupunu
Takapini i te marama
Ko te akapāpū mai ia e
E nuti tumatetenga tetai
Kua takapini aere ua te kuriri i te are e tai epetoma katoa
Te pepe i runga i to maramarama
Inapo e akaïro te reira
No te tungane marū
I mua ake ka oki atu ei i tona tere openga ki
'Avaiki, noo ake ra.

Arā-po

Jean Tekura'i'imoana Mason and Akekarō Kairae, 1941-2015

E mārangī te po me e po mārāma
Auraka e tōtō
i to moenga moe ki runga
I te ara tupuna
Auraka e takoto ki raro
Ka takaia koe
Ia ratou e tōtō ara i to ratou au
paiēre
No te aere ki te moana
Te kata ara e te imene
E ngaro atu e māmāiāta.

Taku tupuna vaine ko teia nei ao

Jean Tekura'i'imoana Mason and Akekarō Kairae, 1941-2015

Te aue nei taku tupuna va'ine
I tona kiri ravarava
Ko tei pakiakia i te kite kore
Kua ki tona mata i te repo
No te au angaanga tāvi'ivi'i
i te ao rangi
Mei te rua anere mata'iti i teia nei
To tino kua vai tane'a ua
To nga uāmata kua tipoko ia
Ei pakau puapinga

Te aue nei taku tupuna va'ine
I te tuatau te vai ou ara koe e te 'aka'ie'ie
Kua rakei ia koe e te tamanu e te miro
Kua kakara to pakiri i te ūa
koi topa ua mai nei
I te tuatau ra kua tako'u koe
I te tamariki ki roto ia koe
Kua rongo ratou
i te kutukutu i to puku'atu
Aere mai kia koe
Akangaro'i atu
ki roto i to rima moe ei.

Takiora Tangitoru Kelly

Pamela Takiora Ingram
Honolulu, February 2014

Her hands gently hold a bouquet of small, white flowers
Left ring finger proudly shows her wedding ring
Large, dark, sunken eyes shine at me from the past
Eyebrows like Frida Kahlo's
Handsome broad nose of her Manganian grandfather Numangatini Ariki
Full, perfectly shaped Polynesian lips
With just a suggestion of a smile
Her white missionary style wedding dress
Drapes over her full breasts
Lace collar clipped with a large, pounamu broach
Voluminous long dark hair stylishly arranged in layers
Like a crown on her head
A single white lily pinned high in her hair
She is alone in her sepia wedding photo
Taken in a studio in Tahiti

In another photo she sits with my grandfather, William
Soft black hair pinned back like a good wife
She wears another white dress, holds a basket of flowers
Left elbow intimately, comfortably, leaning on her husband's right knee
His tie, vest, dark jacket and white pants speak of a man of means
Holding a woven hat in his left hand
They look like the perfect couple
My mother never spoke of their broken marriage

How he left her to live alone in the villa he built for her
In Maraerenga
How he moved to his simple cabin on the hill at Te Kaka
With his new woman
Where he died and is buried

royal alberts

Jean Tekura'i'imoana Mason

every time dad saw that tea set
he'd burst into song
the yellow rose of texas...
it's a royal albert yellow rose tea set
thank you very much, grandma would cut him off.
by the time she died the tea set could not be found,
no one knew what happened to it (or would own up);
maybe she changed her mind and sold it,
grandma always said she'd leave it to me in her will,
maybe she gave it away when she got alzheimers.

the first time she got lost
the police had to be called,
it was getting cold and dark.
they found her standing on hunter's corner
looking up and down the street, hugging her handbag.
one day she whispered conspiratorially to dad and I -
the nurses here are not to be trusted,
they are deliberately wrecking my things;
she begged dad and I to take her away from there.
dad summoned the matron,
it's paranoia that makes her shred her own clothes
on the hangers in the wardrobe,

not the staff, said the matron
your mother is not in her right mind.

the wizard of rubik's, chess, and scrabble
can no longer solve a three year old's jigsaw -
let alone recall what she did with the royal alberts.



Authors

Audrey

Audrey Teuki Tetupuariki Tuioti Brown-Pereira

Was born in 1975 on Rarotonga and raised in South Auckland. Her first collection of poetry was *Threads of Tivaevae: Kaleidoskope of Kolours, A Collaboration of Words and Images* with Veronica Vaevae (2002). She published a second anthology *Passages In Between I(s)lands* with Ala Press, Hawaii (2014). Her pieces appear in anthologies *Whetu Moana* and *Mauri Ola* and she has performed at the New Zealand Fringe Festival and Poetry Parnassus in London. Audrey is of Cook Islands Māori and Samoan descent. A graduate of Auckland University and the National University of Samoa, Audrey lives in Samoa with her family.

Alistair

Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, 1925 – 2009

Was born on Rarotonga. His mother was Teu Bosini, from Tongareva and his father was John Archibald 'Jock' Campbell from Otago. Jock moved to the Cook Islands to work for the Cook Islands Trading Company after service in the Gallipoli campaign. When Alistair was seven, his mother, aged 28, died from tuberculosis, after which Jock turned to drink. He died within a year. Alistair, his sister and two brothers were sent to Dunedin and after a short period living with their grandmother were admitted to a local orphanage. Alistair attended Otago Boys' High School, Otago University, Wellington Teachers' College and the Victoria University of Wellington. He was the first Polynesian poet to have a collection published in English (*Mine Eyes Dazzle*, 1950). A prolific author, he published four novels, a number of radio plays, a stage play, and 17 collections of poems. He received many honours, notably the New Zealand Book Award for Poetry (1982), the Pacific Arts Committee Senior Artist Award for Literature (1998), an Honorary D.Litt., from Victoria University of Wellington (1999), the New Zealand Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement (2005) and the New Zealand Order of Merit (2005).

Marjorie

Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe

Was born in Rarotonga in 1930. She was educated at Titikaveka Primary School and in 1944 was awarded a scholarship to study at Epsom Girls' Grammar School. In New Zealand, Marjorie trained as a teacher and in the 1950s began working for the Cook Islands Education Department, as a teacher, teachers' organiser and the first Cook Islands woman lecturer at the Nikao Teachers College. During this time, she developed primary school readers in the Māori language. Subsequently she translated and published the writings of early Cook Islands missionaries as well as editing sections of the stories into English readers. She began university studies during a visit to the University of California, continued at the University of Papua New Guinea and completed her bachelor's degree in 1971 at the University of the South Pacific. Later, employed at USP, she became Director of Extension Services, and on her retirement from USP was appointed Director of the new Centre for Pacific Studies at Auckland University. In the 2009 New Year Honours, Marjorie was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for services to the Cook Islands, the Pacific, education, literature and the community. In 2011, Marjorie was the first woman from the Cook Islands to receive a Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) from the University of the South Pacific.

Johnny

Johnny Frisbie

Was born in 1932 in Papeete, Tahiti to Ngatokorua of Pukapuka and Ohio born American, Robert Dean Frisbie, an author and South Seas trader. Florence "Johnny" Frisbie was only 15 years old when she published her first autobiography *Miss Ulysses* from Puka-Puka (1948) an account of her life on the little-known island of Pukapuka. She has the distinction of being one of the first published women writers from the Pacific Islands. Known as a dancer, writer and broadcaster, she now lives in Hawai'i.

Tai

Ta'i George

Was born in New Zealand. Her mother was from Pukapuka and her father from Atiu. She was born and raised in Otara and lived in Wellington for more than 20 years. She was a Communications Advisor/ Speech writer for Te Puni Kokiri (Ministry of Māori Development) and a stalwart of numerous Pacific women's organisations including PACIFICA and Vahine Orama, Newtown branch.

Joan

Joan Cragg

Was born in Rarotonga and has lived most of her life on the island with brief interludes in New Zealand and Australia. In 2010 she graduated with a Masters of Art and Design (First Class Honours) from Auckland University of Technology. She paints in watercolour and oils and enjoys making sculptures using local materials. Her happy childhood is the subject of much of her writing. Joan is a long serving board member of the University of the South Pacific Cook Islands Advisory Committee.

Michael

Michael Greig

Was born in Nelson, New Zealand in 1953 of Northern Cook Islands, Scottish, English, Jewish and Portuguese heritage. He trained as a medical laboratory technologist. He is involved in performance poetry, contemporary traditional storytelling and tango.

Takiora

Takiora Ingram

Was born and raised in Rarotonga. She is a founding Director of Pacific Writers Connection, a former Board Member of Creative New Zealand, and Chair of the Pacific Arts Committee (1997-2000), Executive Director of the All Islands Coral Reef Committee at NOAA and Coordinator of the Governor's Pacific Regional Ocean Partnership. She is a published writer, poet and freelance journalist, and was Cultural Advisor for the WNET/BBC series *Dancing* in 1991. Her publications include *He'eia Fishpond*, (in *Language of the Land*, 2002), *Te Mana o te Moana* (in *Ho'olaul'ea*, 2012), *Pasifika Dreaming: Positioning Pacific Arts in Sydney's Arts Landscape* (Pacific Arts Association, 2004), and the Cook Islands chapter in the *World Dictionary of Art and The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: Australia and the Pacific Islands*, 1998. She has a Ph.D. in Management and Public Policy from Massey University, New Zealand, a Masters degree in Urban and Regional Planning and a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Hawai'i.

Jon

Jon M. Tikivanotau Jonassen

Was born in Rarotonga in 1949. He was educated at Arorangi Primary School, Ara'ura Primary, and Tereora College. He worked overseas and completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management (1980, BYUH), a Bachelor of Arts in History and Government (1981, BYUH), a Master of Arts in Pacific Islands' studies (1982, UH) and a Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science (1996, UH). Returning to Rarotonga, Dr. Jonassen was appointed Secretary of Foreign Affairs for the Cook Islands Government (1983-86), Director of Programmes for the South Pacific Commission (1987-90), and Secretary of the Ministry of Cultural Development (1990-93). In 1993, he was appointed assistant and Associate Professor of Political Science at Brigham Young University. In 1998, he became High Commissioner for the Cook Islands in New Zealand, accredited to Australia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea. In 2014, he was awarded an MBE for Culture, Music and Public Community Services to the Cook Islands.

Kauraka

Kauraka Kauraka, 1951 – 1997

Was born in Tongatai, Avarua Village, Rarotonga. His mother was a descendant of Tefaingaitu Ariki of Manihiki and his father was part Manihiki, part Mangaian and part Chinese. In 1967, Kauraka attended Northland College in New Zealand and, on graduation, completed a teaching qualification at Northshore Teachers College. He joined the Betela Dance Troupe in 1976 and travelled to Japan as a professional singer and musician. In 1979, he attended the University of Papua New Guinea as an exchange student and in 1980 graduated from the University of the South Pacific with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Subsequently, he studied for a M.A. in anthropology from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He is the author of six collections of poetry in English and Māori, including *Return to Havaiki* (1985), *Dreams of a Rainbow: Moemoea a Te Anuanua: Poems* (1987), *Manakonako (Reflections)* (1992), and *My Dawning Star* (1999). In addition to being a poet, writer, and musician, Kauraka was a professional anthropologist with the Ministry of Cultural Development, Cook Islands. On his death in 1997, he was buried on the atoll of Manihiki, in the northern Cook Islands.

Vereara

Vereara Maeva

Was born in Aitutaki in 1940. She was educated on Aitutaki, Rarotonga and at the University of Auckland. She was a teacher for many years, before working for the Public Service Commission (1980-96). She is holder of the title Paenui Rangatira under Tinomana Ariki. A leading member of the National Council of Women, Vereara was for many years President of the Cook Islands Association of NGOs. She is a former President of Ta'unga Writers and Artists Association and is a highly regarded musician, dancer, choreographer and composer of songs, pe'e and ute, as well as a noted tivaivai artist.

Jean

Jean Tekura'i'imoana Mason

Was born in Rarotonga to an English father and a Cook Islands mother from the island of Ma'uke, where Jean lived until she was 6 years old. She was educated in Ma'uke, Rarotonga and New Zealand. Jean has been museum curator of the Cook Islands Library and Museum Society since 2000 and manager since 2005. Her literary contributions include co-editorship of *Mana Cook Islands Special* (2000) and her own poetry collection, *Tatau: Tattoo* (2001). Her work has been extensively anthologized and her poems "Not that kind of Māori" and "Turakina Street" were selected for broadcast by the BBC. In her role as museum curator, Jean has written on dance, weaving, tapa, tattoo, and collaborated with the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History on tapa restoration. Her most recent publication "The tutunga is silent now: the lost art of tapa making in the Cook Islands" appeared in *TAPA – De L'Écorce A L'Étoffe, Art Millenaire D'Océanie*; Somogy éditions d'Art, Paris, France, ed. Michel Charleux: 2017.

Mona

Mona Matepi

Was born in 1960 on Mangaia where she attended Oneroa Primary School and Mangaia Junior High School before moving to Tereora College, Rarotonga. She started working as a print and broadcast journalist with the state-owned Cook Islands Broadcasting and Newspaper Corporation (CIBNC) during the 1980's and subsequently with Cook Islands Television (CITV) throughout the 90's. As a script writer/producer, her proposal for a 52 episode children's T.V. programme "Mokopets" was granted a UNESCO Pacific Award for an initial 12-episode pilot series in 1997-98. From 2000 to 2011, Mona worked at the local Rarotonga office of WWF, the international conservation network, as a project officer and, later, as its country manager. In 2012, she moved to New Zealand, resuming her education at Waikato University in 2015 and currently at the College of Asia Pacific at the Australia National University.

Inangaro

Inangaro Papatua, 1946 – 2018

Was born in Ivirua, Mangaia, educated at Mangaia High School and completed secondary education at Tereora College. She later studied at the Cook Islands Teachers College and began work as a teacher at Ivirua Primary School. The daughter of a senior Mangaian tumu korero, Mrs. Tere'evangeria Aratangi, Ina was a prolific composer, choreographer, community leader, church leader and tumu korero. A language and culture expert, she was a major resource for two dictionaries of the Mangaian language including the online dictionary taramangaia.com

Emma

Emma Emily Ngakuravaru Powell

Is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Pacific Studies programme, Va'aomanū Pasifika, at Victoria University of Wellington. In 2013 she completed her M.A. (English) at the University of Auckland in which she mapped the Cook Islands Anglophone literary tradition. Emma also has a Bachelor of Commerce and Administration in the area of Public Policy. Before commencing Ph.D. studies, she worked with the NZ Department of Internal Affairs, the Auckland Council and the Waitangi Tribunal. Emma has genealogical affiliations to Atiu and Mangaia.

Mariana

Mariana Maevaraurii Powell

Was born on Rarotonga in 1944 to Elizabeth Marsters from Palmerston Island and Ronald Powell from Ramsgate, England. She is the third child of five girls and twin boys. Mariana was educated in Rarotonga at the Side School, Tereora College and in New Zealand at New Plymouth Girls High School. She has worked in business in both New Zealand and Rarotonga. She writes stories of her childhood and wrote her first poem after losing her son in 1972. She particularly enjoys writing in her mother's native language – Palmerston English. Some of her Palmerston English work has been published in Rachel Hendery's book *One Man is an Island* (2015) and her story "Kapok Season" appears in *Kiva – contemporary writing from the Cook Islands* (George, 2015).

Vaine-Iriano

Vaine-Iriano Rasmussen (Wichman)

Was born in Rarotonga in 1961 and traces family and customary ties with Ngati Tamakeu and Ngati TeTika in Vaka Takitumu, and to Tongareva and Manihiki in the Northern Cook Islands. She began writing short stories at primary school but switched to poetry at Tereora College. After schooling in Rarotonga she completed a B.A. in Management at the University of the South Pacific. She was an early contributor of poetry and short stories to *Mana – A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature*. At the conclusion of her undergraduate studies, Vaine returned to work in the Cook Islands Ministry of Planning, followed by M.Sc. studies in Economics at the University of Bradford, U.K. From 1989 – 1995, she worked as an economist for the South Pacific Commission. Since 1997 she has worked as an independent consultant.

Florence

Florence Tia Syme-Buchanan

Was born in Rarotonga in 1963 to a Cook Islands/Tahitian mother and Irish father, the writer Ronald Syme. She has been a correspondent for various international news agencies and publications. As a freelance journalist she has exposed many Cook Islands controversies and political scandals.

Tere

Tere Tarapu

Was born in Aitutaki in 1938. After schooling in Aitutaki, he attended the Cook Islands Teachers College. He taught Cook Islands Māori at Tereora College for many years until retirement. His first four poems in Māori were published in *Mana: A South Pacific Journal of Language and Literature*, Volume 5. His first poetry collection was *Matapo o te Ngakau* (Blindness of the Heart). He has written and broadcast a number of stories on Radio Cook Islands.

Mike

Teatuakaro Michael Tavioni

Was born in Rarotonga in 1947 and was educated in Rarotonga and New Zealand, completing a Diploma in Horticulture at Massey University. He was initially a horticulturist with the Ministry of Agriculture but for the past 30 years has been a full time creative artist working mainly in wood and stone. He was founder of the Akatikitiki Arts Society and of the Ta'unga Arts Society. He remains extensively involved in public affairs, and is a passionate advocate of greater self-sufficiency for the Cook Islands. His publications include *Speak Your Mind* (2002), *Sink or Swim* (2003) and *Voices Along The Wayside* (2011). In 2008 he was awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Art and Design from AUT University and in 2018, a Masters in Art from AUT for his thesis *Tāura ki te Atua - The role of 'Akairo in Cook Islands Art*. Michael is the longest serving board member of the University of the South Pacific Cook Islands Advisory Committee.

Makiuti

Makiuti Tongia

Was born in Rarotonga in 1953, and educated at Avarua Primary School and Tereora College before entering the Cook Islands Teachers College. He received his first degree from the University of the South Pacific (B.A. in Social Sciences). While still a student he promoted creative writing among other students as editor of *Unispac*. He was a foundation member of the South Pacific Creative Arts Society, established in 1972 to promote the development of modern Pacific literature and is widely regarded as a key figure in the first wave of that movement. He later studied at Ohio University and Western Kentucky University for a M.A. in ethnology. He studied for an M.A. (Business Studies) with Massey University and has done short courses in Australia, India and Malaysia. He has been employed as an anthropologist, curator, politician, editor, diplomat and consultant.



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Kia orana e

Kia Manuia

